

The PEWTER COLLECTORS' CLUB of AMERICA

BULLETIN No. 36—JULY, 1956

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Dr. Abbott's Giant Tankard

The two pieces which follow under this heading are the outcome of the publication in the latest Bulletin, dated November, 1955, of Dr. Abbott's article on his discovery of a huge tankard which he attributed to one of the Francis Bassetts. Following the publication of this article the editor received informal comment from several English authorities to the effect that this tankard might, quite conceivably, be of English rather than American origin. Eventually a formal presentation of the case for English origin (based, naturally, upon the limited evidence contained in Dr. Abbott's article) was submitted in the form of a Bulletin article by Ronald F. Michaelis, an honorary member of the P.C.C.A. and certainly one of the foremost savants in the pewter world today.

This article was sent forthwith to Dr. Abbott with an invitation to reply. The invitation was promptly and happily accepted and the reply arrived in due course in the form of a letter to the editor. Both documents follow as received and with each there is presented additional evidence of a photographic nature. A discussion of the complex subject of attribution, carried on across the waters of the Atlantic by two men of such outstanding reputation as Dr. Abbott and Mr. Michaelis, is bound to be piquantly interesting. We all hope, surely, that neither man considers his case ready for the jury yet and that we may look forward to the next installment in the next Bulletin together with whatever comment may be forthcoming from other sources. Mr. Michaelis' article follows:

Bassett Out-Bassetts Bassett

*A query raised by
Mr. Ronald F. Michaelis*

In the article in the November 1955 Bulletin (No. 35), under the above title, Dr. Abbott shows a giant domed lidded tankard, with denticulated frontal projection to the cover, and, by implication, suggests that this is possibly a creative work of one of the two Francis Bassetts.

The mark (or such of it as can be seen) almost undoubtedly shows the initials "F.B."

My first reaction, on seeing the photographed giant, was that it was an extremely interesting English tankard, of c. 1700-1710, and I am still more inclined to this view now that I have read the text which accompanied the illustration.

It is not, by any means, unknown in England for tankards of this large capacity to be made here; in fact, I show one in my new book ("Antique Pewter of the British Isles")

in Fig. 29. In England they are known to contain 4 Imperial pints of liquid (or 80 fluid ozs.), in other words they are of true $\frac{1}{2}$ -gallon (Imperial) capacity.

The American liquid measure conforms to the Old English Wine Standard, and contains 16.6 fluid ounces to the pint; thus the tankard in question does not contain any complete multiple of American pints.

The tankard is stated by Dr. Abbott to contain 4 pints 12 ozs. (presumably American standard measure), or 78.4 fluid ozs., and I venture to voice the opinion that this, to all intents and purposes, is as near equivalent to 80 fluid ozs. as makes no matter.

My experience has shown that if one attempts to measure capacity with two distinct measuring glasses there will be a discrepancy in the findings by at least 2%, which is, in fact, just about the discrepancy here.

I am, of course, not aware whether it was the custom in America for makers of lidded

tankards to use a specific capacity for each piece, as it was in England.

Our domed lidded tankards range from the $\frac{1}{2}$ -pint, through the 1-pint, $1\frac{1}{2}$ -pint, 2-pint and 3-pint sizes up to the 4-pint, and many of them can show capacity seals, such as Crowned "W.R.," or Crowned "A.R.," marks denoting that they have been checked by local government inspectors for capacity because, undoubtedly, they have also served the purposes of measures.

It is quite possible that there may be a discrepancy of a fraction of a fluid oz. per pint in any two that are tested, and I am reasonably sure that so small a variation was sometimes winked at by inspectors, if, indeed it was even noticed at all.

I do not consider that what can be seen of the mark "F.B." is, alone, sufficient to attribute Dr. Abbott's tankard to either of the Francis Bassetts for, if one refers to Laughlin's "American Pewter," plate LIX, No. 456; or even to the marks attributed to Frederick Bassett, Nos. 465 and 468, there is little to convince one that it is exactly similar to any.

In the aforementioned three marks there is some device or other in addition to the initials, which device is missing from the imperfect impression from the tankard.

It does not follow, of course, that it was not visible in the original striking, but the touch, in its present state, unfortunately cannot be accepted as evidence, one way or the other.

There is, in fact, just as much reason to attribute the mark to an unknown English maker of porringers.

I have before me a single-eared porringer, with "peacock's tail" ear, (a type not shown by Laughlin, but illustrated in my articles "English Pewter Poringers," from "Apollo" Magazine, Part 1, No. 23 in the chart of drawings, and in Part IV, in Figs. XXI and XXII). This bears a mark on the reverse of the ear of the initials "F.B." in a small beaded circle, with three dots at top, and some other ornamental device at the bottom, as drawn herewith.

The touch is exactly $\frac{3}{8}$ inch across, and the letters are about $\frac{5}{32}$ nds of an inch high.

Pending further evidence, I would say that, provided the tankard shows all the

signs of age consistent with a lifetime of 200 years or so, it is most probably an English export piece.



*The touch of an unidentified English pewterer
found on a porringer handle.*

To this Dr. Abbott replies:

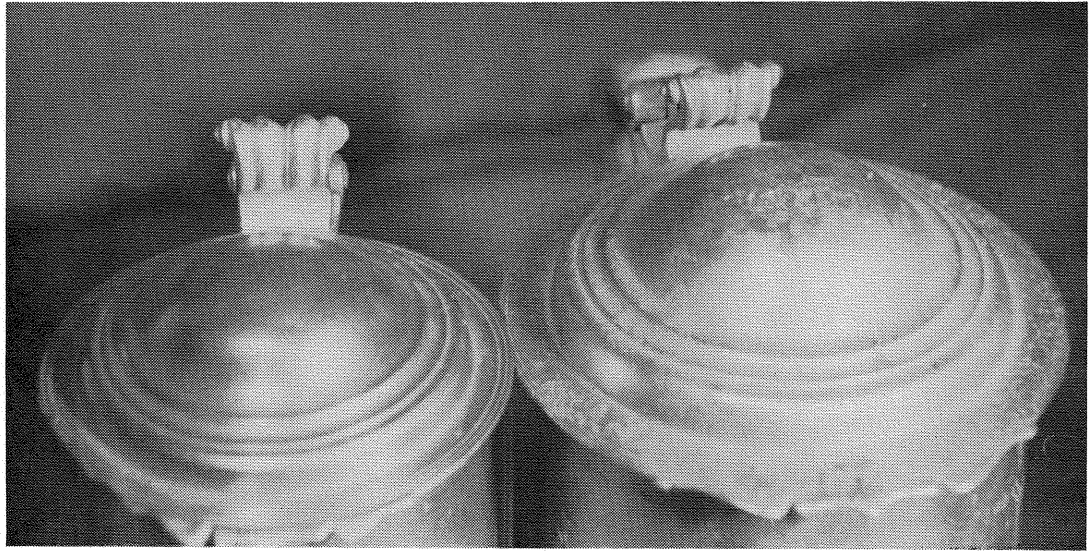
Dear Mr. Deckelman:

I have read with great interest Mr. Michaelis' succinct and ably presented deductions concerning the provenience of the large tankard, the subject of a brief article by me in the November '55 issue of the Bulletin, and in which I suggested a tentative attribution to Francis Bassett I, as its maker.

Mr. Michaelis' impressions appear to be based on two (2) premises; as follows:

1. The tankard in question is of 78.4 oz. capacity; does not contain any complete multiple of (present) American pints; but does closely approach the 80 oz. standard capacity of the English $\frac{1}{2}$ gal. tankards.
2. The touch does not show certain points of identity with any of the known F. Bassett touches, and might with as much reason be attributed to an unknown English maker of porringers, a copy of whose touch he presents in his communication.

As to premise No. 1. The Encyclopedia Britannica affords the information that the measures in common use in the American Colonies prior to (and for a long period of years after) the Revolutionary War were all of English origin and were the same as those in use in Great Britain. As a matter of record, the English did not abandon the 231 cu. in. gallon until 1824. As it seems mutually agreed, the age of the tankard long antedates the Revolution, and accepting Mr. Michaelis' calculations; it is not apparent to me that its approximately identical capacity with that of the $\frac{1}{2}$ gal. English tankard of the



Detail of thumb-pieces and crenelated covers on "I L" quart tankard (left) and large "F B" tankard. The thumb-piece of "F B" has been accidentally bent forward a bit.

period constitutes any evidence whatever of its English origin, for the standards of liquid measure in both England and the American Colonies were at that time exactly similar. While it is true $\frac{1}{2}$ gal. tankards must be of great rarity in America (at the moment I know of no other), and if such were produced here, I believe most will agree the Bassetts would have fabricated them, for we here know them to have been great innovators, particularly of massive items in the field of pewter manufacture and most assuredly they would have conformed to the standards of fluid measurement then current.

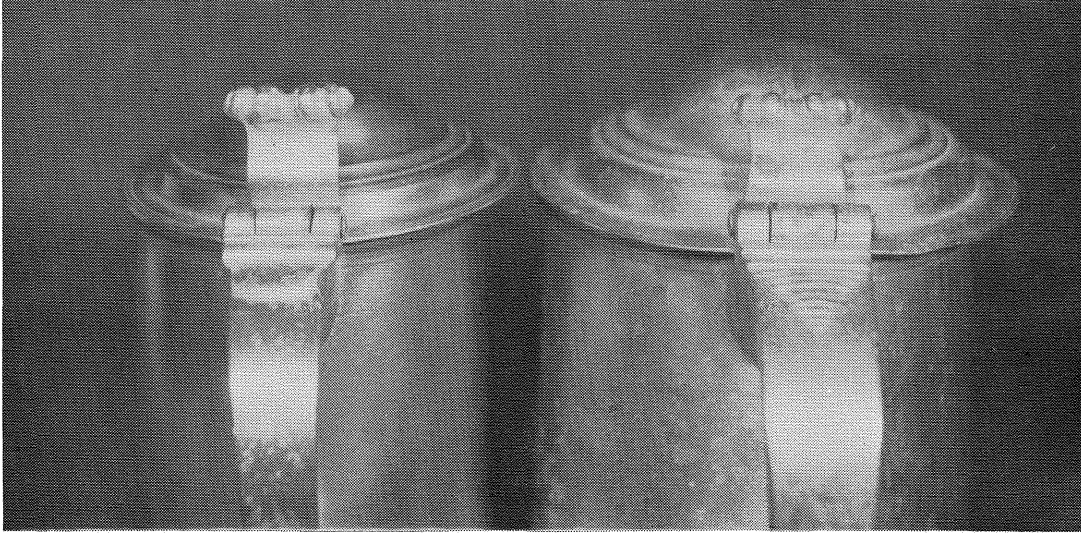
As to premise No. 2, Mr. Michaelis' contention is on much surer ground. As he states: the touch bears no resemblance whatever in appearance, decor (or size) to any of the presently known "F.B." marks. Neither does it show the faintest evidence of the decorative devices which he illustrates in the touch of the unknown English maker of porringers. Insofar as can be made out, using a lens of high magnifying power, the touch consists in a plain unadorned circle with the initials "F.B." centered therein. Its measurements do in part closely approach those submitted for the aforementioned English touch. A re-measurement of the dimensions of the tankard's touch by an expert in such matters indicates a slight change from those previously reported, the width of the circle being $\frac{5}{12}$ ths of an inch

and the height of the lettering $\frac{1}{6}$ th inch. This minor variation appears to me to be wholly inconsequential and well within the allowable margin of human error.

As we American collectors and students of the alloy are well aware, all of the Bassetts had a marked penchant for frequent changes in design of their touches, so much so in fact that the tangled skein of attribution of the "F.B." touches is still incompletely unraveled. Furthermore, as these many touches come to light but gradually over a period of many years, in my opinion it is not illogical to believe the end is not yet, and that hitherto unknown touches of this remarkable family of pewterers will eventually make their appearance.

I am of course, quite unfamiliar with the design of the crenelation appearing on the frontal projection of covers of English tankards; but that on this tankard of unsettled provenience is identical (except for size) in design with that found on the several tankards (quart) by John Will, Frederick Bassett, an "I.L." in my possession, and an unmarked tankard attributed to Joseph Leddel by a very reliable authority. All of these, be it noted, were New York pewterers of the early period.

The matter of thumb-pieces too, is worthy of some consideration; and again I plead unfamiliarity with English usage in this respect. That of the tankard under examination is similar to those appearing on tankards



Detail of decor on handle of "F B" (right). If other tankard or can handles showing this decor are reported from either America or England it would constitute weighty presumptive evidence of the provenience of the "F B" tankard.



A much better picture of the "F B" touch than the photomicrograph reproduced in the November '55 issue. Note segment of plain circle around touch.

by John and Frederick Bassett, Wm. Kirby, Wm. Bradford (attribution) and those of the two probable Leddels above referred to. Again, all these pewterers were of the early New York group. I should also mention I have before me the large tankard and that by "I.L.", and that in the mid-section of the thumb-piece of each there is a small variant which I can only explain satisfactorily as a mould defect.

I am constrained to admit I am in a bit of a quandary as regards the handle decor of this contentious tankard. None of those in my own collection, or those to which I have access at this time, show any suggestion of a like decorative device; and as the "Deckelman dead-line" is in the immediate offing I have not yet received replies to the several queries I have directed concerning this particular point. These of course will be reported in a later issue. Regrettably too, the detail of the handle decor was not shown in the photographs used with the original article, and therefore Mr. Michaelis had no opportunity to discuss it.

Finally, and I feel reasonably certain Mr. Michaelis will agree, it is quite apparent from the content of both articles bearing upon the question, that neither of us has submitted what the legalistic-minded experts in evidence would consider a trial-proof case for either of our tentative attributions. If this primary conclusion is true I have a not unreasonable, but highly difficult of accomplishment, suggestion to offer. If there is some slight reason to believe we here on this side of the Atlantic are about to be alerted to a new and rarified field of study, an ionosphere, so to speak, occupied only by infinitely few 1/2 gal. tankards, it would be of the greatest service to us if Mr. Michaelis could somehow arrange to locate a tankard of the given capacity bearing the "F.B." touch, have it photographed in detail and forward us the prints for critical evaluation by some of our more distinguished savants at a future meeting of the P.C.C.A., thus laying forever the pallid specter which has arisen amongst us.

Sincerely yours,
DR. ADELBERT C. ABBOTT.

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New York Regional Group Activities

The New York Regional Group celebrated the tenth anniversary of its existence by inviting the members of the P.C.C.A. and their guests to a dinner at the Brooklyn Museum and a viewing of the celebrated Poole Collection which is housed there. Eric deJonge, immediate past President of the P.C.C.A. was chairman of the occasion which took place on Saturday, February 11, 1956. One hundred and forty members and guests attended, representing, geographically, a seven state area.

During the course of the dinner, which was preceded by cocktails, addresses of welcome were given by Dr. Robert Mallory III, President of the P.C.C.A., by Mr. Edgar C. Schenk, Director of the Brooklyn Museum, and by Mr. Charles F. Edgecomb, Chairman of the New York Regional Group. Mrs. Philip Huntington gave a stimulating review of the ten year history of the New York Regional Group. Following the dinner the entire party moved to the fourth floor of the museum where a lecture room had been established and where the Poole Collection was on view, a great part of it on open tables and "touchable." There, after introductions by Mr. deJonge, Mr. Marvin D. Schwartz, Curator of Decorative Arts at the Brooklyn Museum, used slides in outlining the curator's viewpoint of the pewter collection and Mr. Charles F. Montgomery, Director of the du Pont Winterthur Museum, gave the major address of the evening which included a piece-by-piece analysis of the more significant items on display. The meeting ended with a question and answer session ably conducted by Mr. Eric deJonge.

From every standpoint this meeting was a huge success. The Brooklyn Museum offered, not only to the "stannophile" but to the antiquarian at large, a series of vistas which were positively breath-taking and the atmosphere, from beginning to end, was friendly and festive. The grateful thanks of the P.C.C.A. are due and are hereby tendered to the New York Regional Group, the Brooklyn Museum, the speakers of the even-

ing and to those who worked behind the scenes in planning this occasion and bringing it smoothly to its climax.

The New York Regional Group held its second meeting of the calendar year on May 5th in the Richmondtown Museum, Staten Island, to which the organization had been invited by the Staten Island Historical Society. The Richmondtown Museum is one of the focal points in the plan for restoration of the early village which is now in progress.

Officers for the coming year were elected and their names appear in the Bulletin along with those of the National Group. Dr. Kurt Semon was made an honorary member of the New York Regional Group in recognition of his invaluable and untiring service to the organization.

Yearly dues of two dollars were established by the New York Regional Group and members must send their dues to the Treasurer, Miss Edna M. Netter, P.O. Box 325, Dutch Lane Road, Freehold, N. J., if they wish to be notified of future meetings. Membership in the New York Regional Group is limited to those who are also members of the National Group.

Following the business meeting tea and cakes were served and a pewter clinic was held during which were discussed items brought by members, items which are the property of the Richmondtown Museum and items which were submitted by interested members of the Staten Island Historical Society. Many pieces of very considerable interest, including a Joseph Belcher basin, were available for the clinical discussion.

For the sake of the record, mention is made here, unforgivably belated, of the astoundingly successful meeting held by the New York Regional Group on the afternoon of October 31st, 1953 at Raynham Hall, Oyster Bay, N. Y. A great deal of pewter, much of it of historical significance and all of it of museum quality, was on display. Some two hundred pewter enthusiasts, far in excess of the number anticipated by the most liberal forecast, attended this meeting. Mrs. Philip Huntington was the organizer and guiding spirit of the occasion which received excellent coverage in the New York press.

The Annual Meeting

Plans had been outlined for the annual meeting of the P.C.C.A. to be held in Boston during the month of May. Unfortunately, the site selected proved to be unavailable during that month and since, according to our constitution, four weeks' notice in advance of the annual meeting must be given to the club members, it was too late to work out a compromise location without having to schedule the meeting during the summer doldrums. Our President, Dr. Robert Malory III, will use his constitutional authority to re-schedule the meeting for a date in the early fall at one of several very promising locations which are under consideration at present.

P.C.C.A. Notes

The Pewter Collectors' Club of America has accepted into membership thirty-five applicants during the 1955-1956 season. This is but one of many signs which indicate a steady and increasingly rapid expansion of pewter-consciousness and pewter-interest. These additions to our ranks are heartily welcomed by us all and we hope that they will find, through contact with the P.C.C.A., their interest heightened, their knowledge advanced and their pursuit of the gray metal made more rewarding. It is highly regrettable that some of our new members have received their copies of Bulletin No. 35, to which their membership entitled them, only after lengthy and, quite likely, exasperating delay. The weakness in our system of distribution which brought about this particular situation has been remedied.

There have been a number of requests for an up-to-date list of members and addresses in order to facilitate correspondence between members as well as to acquaint members with the names of fellow-members in the various regions. Such a list has been compiled and checked for accuracy against other existing lists. It is anticipated that each member will receive a mimeographed or otherwise reproduced copy of this list in the very near future. It is too bulky to appear as part of the printed matter in the Bulletin.

Of particular interest is word that the P.C.C.A. is, to use a favorite word with a nationally known columnist, "infanticipating." Mr. Vernon Jay Morse, 5505 Laurel Canyon Boulevard, North Hollywood, California, is actively engaged in organizing a local chapter or Regional Group of the P.C.C.A. in California. The history of the New York Regional Group certainly indicates both the desirability and the practicability of such a step. Several other areas of this country are ready for similar exploitation and await only the assumption of leadership or the indication of a rallying-point.

Fellow Stannophiles!

The word "stannophile" is used in the report of the tenth anniversary meeting of the New York Regional Group at the Brooklyn Museum. It is not a new word to the Bulletin, however, having been used by Dr. Reginald French in his article (Bulletin 32) entitled "The Pewter of Cellini." The word delighted me and I adopted it immediately with enthusiasm as it is very soothing to the ego to imply, by the use of this word, that one's interest in pewter is in reality a scientific or, at least, a pseudo-scientific preoccupation. Since first spotting it in the Bulletin pages, the word has been used by me on every appropriate occasion and has created a little stir among scrabble-addicts, crossword puzzle fans and other word-conscious individuals. Let us, each and all, adopt the term, use it frequently and *in hoc signe vincit*.

The word is a compound of the Latin word *stannum* meaning both tin and pewter and the word-element, essentially derived from the Greek, meaning "lover." I believe the word originated with Dr. French who heads the Department of Romance Languages at Amherst College and who is one of America's foremost authorities on the subject of pewter. When accused of coining the word, Dr. French confessed that he may have done so, leaving the door ajar in the event that some earlier use of the word might be discovered. He pointed out, however, one danger inherent in admitting the word to common usage and that is the fact that one must admit at the same time, at least by

implication, the existence of its antonym, "stannophobe."

A stannophobe, it goes without saying, is the sort of person who snorts derisively when you show him a piece of pewter — an early flagon, let us say — and exclaims, to the accompaniment of his most malevolent sneers, "I wouldn't have that dirty stuff around my house." He also indicates, with a disconcerting degree of candor, that he thinks you more than slightly balmy when he learns how much you have paid for one of your most cherished possessions. Let us embark upon a crusade, the object of which will be the conversion of stannophobes into stannophiles. Should we find ourselves unable to accomplish this mission, or should the accomplishment of it result in a still further and substantial increase in the price of American pewter, we can consider other methods of exterminating the species. As a last resort we can simply ignore the stannophobe as being unrelated to us by inversion. To carry Dr. French's thought along another step or so, the stannophobe need not be considered the antithesis of the stannophile at all; he is really the antithesis of the "stannomaniac," which is another thing entirely. Once we have reached this conclusion we must close, as unobtrusively as possible, our closet door lest the infant-sized skeleton which has been concealed therein be detected.

W. D.

The Last of The Danforths

Josiah Danforth of Middletown, Connecticut, son of William Danforth, was the last of the fabulous Danforths to appear in the annals of American pewter. Heretofore it was supposed that his activity in the pewter industry ceased in February of 1837 when, according to the research of Ledlie I. Laughlin, he sold his lot and shop together with the "steam engine and fixtures thereon" to Jasper Graham of Wethersfield and William H. Savage of Middletown. A most interesting document, here reproduced, demonstrates

incontrovertibly that he was still in action under the name of J. Danforth & Co., as late as October of 1842. This document raises a number of questions which are, at the moment, unanswered save through speculation since several sources of historical information have been unable to contribute further facts and time for individual detective work has been lacking. If any reader of the Bulletin can add to our knowledge in this matter, his cooperation will be highly welcome.

Referring to Ledlie I. Laughlin's "Pewter in America," the successors to the business of Josiah Danforth seem to have carried on the business under several changes of ownership for about two years. At least, information presently available does not extend beyond February of 1839 when, following the inability to meet the interest payments on a mortgage, the property was quitclaimed to William H. Savage of the original Graham and Savage partnership. The operation of the business during the two years which followed its sale by Josiah Danforth would seem to have been anything but an undiluted success.

The list of wares offered for sale surely forms a melancholy commentary on the situation of the pewter industry in 1842. The death rattle is plainly audible. Manufacture is confined almost exclusively to trivia; low prices and new patterns are emphasized and the financial squeeze is all too evident. The No. 2 "spittoon," obviously of smaller size than the others, is interesting merely because one is tempted to speculate as to whether it was designed for use by children or for use in places where good markmanship was a source of pride and skill maintained by constant practise in aiming at smaller than average targets.

It seems certain that, whatever the reason may have been for the existence of J. Danforth & Co., the venture was a short-lived one. No identifying touch has appeared as yet and, although Josiah Danforth was but thirty-nine at the time and had thirty years more to live, we must allow him ample time to become the "successful manufacturer of trusses" and "prominent citizen" which Ledlie Laughlin declares him to have been in later life.

Price List

OF THE LATEST AND MOST APPROVED PATTERNS OF
BRITANNIA WARE,

Manufactured by

J. DANFORTH & Co.

Middletown, Conn.

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|--|---------------|
| Tea Sets, - - - - - | \$5 00 | Cream Cups, - - - - - | pr. doz. 7 50 |
| No. 16, Coffee Pots, - - - - - | pr. doz. 17 00 | Sugar Bowles, - - - - - | " 8 00 |
| " 14, " " " " " " " " " " | 14 00 | Stand Lamps, - - - - - | " 6 00 |
| No. 15, Tea Pots - - - - - | 12 00 | Slop Bowles, - - - - - | " 4 00 |
| " 14, " " " " " " " " " " | 10 00 | Lather Boxes, plain, " " | 2 25 |
| " 13, " " " " " " " " " " | 8 50 | Do. " with partition, " " | 2 50 |
| " 12, " " " " " " " " " " | 7 50 | Do. Tumblers, - - - - - | 1 00 |
| " 16, " fancy patterns, " " | 10 50 | " " with handles, " " | 1 50 |
| Spittoons, - plain, " " | 8 25 | Castors, 4 holes, 4 50, with bottles, 8 00 | |
| Do. - with handles, " " | 8 50 | " 5 " 5 00 " " 9 00 | |
| Do. with feet & handles, " " | 8 75 | " 6 " 5 50 " " 10 00 | |
| No. 2, " " " " " " " " " " | 5 50 | Bed. Lamps 2 12 | |

Middletown Oct 27, 1842

Messrs William Cresson & Bro

Gentlemen.

450 have
 at the steam boat office 1 Doz No 13 Coffee
 sets of 13 sets for 8 Doz bed Lamps at 250 per
 which will be delivered for receipt place
 we think will sell well at the low price
 above - we have a considerable amount
 out to pay next month and would feel
 under great obligations to you if you can
 conveniently send us your note for 200 or 250
 dollars by month - you will see by the list
 above that we have reduced the prices of most
 the articles manufactured by us - your friend
 J. Danforth

The Bulletin-Reviewed and Previewed

With the publication of Bulletin No. 35 a new Publication Committee made its debut. It announced as one of its objectives the issuance of three Bulletins during the year and appealed for the contribution of material from club members as an essential factor in the realization of this objective. Weeks became months, during which the supply of material reached the vanishing point, with the result that the projected mid-winter issue of the Bulletin had to be abandoned, since it would have contained exactly one small contributed article plus a report of the tenth anniversary meeting of the New York Regional Group and whatever chitchat, consequential or inconsequential, your editor could materialize out of his own mind. While your editor has always found it comparatively easy to go into a trance, and while he hears voices constantly, the actual production of ectoplasm in a more than quite moderate quantity is somewhat beyond his powers.

For the present issue of the Bulletin we are once again leaning heavily, entirely too heavily, upon a trio of tried and true contributors; our honorary member, Ronald F. Michaelis, of London, and our honored members, Dr. Adelbert C. Abbott and Eric deJonge. Thus we are giving the appearance of health, even though it may well be compared to the temporarily revivifying effect of a blood transfusion on an anaemic patient. What we want and need in order to present a true picture of health is the active participation of many more club members in Bulletin affairs.

Interesting fields of fact and speculation abound in the world of pewter and they are, in many instances, equally available both to the neophyte and the acknowledged expert (this for the benefit of those diffident members who feel that their knowledge of pewter must be encyclopedic to warrant the committing of their thoughts and discoveries to the columns of the Bulletin). The books of Laughlin and Kerfoot contain the seeds of many an investigative tree if one will but

make notes as one goes through their pages. Particularly may subjects for discussion be turned up in browsing through periodicals and back numbers of the Bulletin where may be found many of those minutiae which are charged with provocation but which would be out of place in a comprehensive book. Several directions of inquiry are hereby tossed gently into the lap of whomever wishes to carry matters further.

Both Ledlie I. Laughlin (Bulletin 13) and Dr. Percy Raymond (Bulletin 24), in speaking of britannia, mention as an early experimenter with this alloy a certain Captain Bowditch of Salem in the year 1814. Born in Salem in 1773 and living there in 1814 was Nathaniel Bowditch, the great American astronomer and mathematician, whose book on navigation, with its tables of computation and calculation, is still, one hundred and fifty years later, the standard text at the U.S. Naval Academy. Bowditch was a ship's master as was his father before him and, likely, several of his brothers. Nathaniel Bowditch may have been the very man referred to above, although a member of his immediate family would seem to be a more likely candidate. Will someone volunteer to explore this ground?

A small quantity of whale-oil lamps and teapots exist which bear the touch of Brook Farm. Every more than casual student of American literature knows about Brook Farm for it was a celebrated, though unsuccessful, experiment in the communistic way of life which took place in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, (1841-1847) and had the active support of such profound and liberal thinkers of that time and place as George Ripley (its founder), Charles Dana, Nathaniel Hawthorne, the vastly underestimated Bronson Alcott (father of the much lesser Louisa May) and Ralph Waldo Emerson. More information about Brook Farm should certainly interest many members of the P.C.C.A. and might (who knows?) double or triple the value of their Brook

Farm pewter. A great biography of Bronson Alcott entitled "Pedlar's Progress," which won a Pulitzer prize for its author, Odell Shepard, should contain an interesting account of Brook Farm.

Reading the name of David Melville in the annals of American pewter makes one wonder if a blood kinship might not exist between him and Herman Melville, author of that vast conglomerate of the physical and the metaphysical known as *Moby Dick*. David Melville was born in Newport in 1755 and Herman Melville in New York in 1819 so that they were definitely not contemporaries. Nevertheless, they may be, as Sir Toby Belch says in *Twelfth Night*, "consanguinous," for both men trace back to Boston through their paternal ancestors, the grandfather of Herman Melville being one of the "Indians" in that celebrated masquerade which is called The Boston Tea Party.

We can learn much more about the lives and the personalities of the major American pewterers. In fact, the field of American pewter seems to offer an environment ideally suited to the evolution and development of its own hagiology. Much of the necessary data has been compiled but never assembled. In the reference room of almost any well equipped library one may find an encyclopedia of American biography which will, if properly mined, yield a quantity of high-grade ore. Many of our pewterers were men of high standing in the localities in which they worked and, as a result, much of our work has been done for us by investigators interested not in pewter but in the life stories of prominent citizens.

To the objection that this is emphasizing the man rather than the metal, one must reply that our interest in pewter is not exclusively a metallurgical one. To whatever degree we are able to evoke the personality of the pewterer himself, we are able to add another dimension to our interest in his product. Who can separate the man from his work when both are known? How much of our interest in the paintings of Gauguin, or of van Gogh, represents an interest in the painter? How much do we see of Chopin in his music? Or of Shelley in his poetry? To strike nearer home, why is the silver of Paul Revere so enormously prized? We speak of

Colonel William Will and *Major Gershom Jones* in order to add to their pewter the luster of their patriotic deeds. Supposing them to have been pewterers (which, of course, they were not) how interesting and how valuable today would be the products of Ethan Allen or Israel Putnam or, even, of such scapegraces as Benedict Arnold and Aaron Burr?

Let us, by all means, explore in this important and somewhat neglected field of research and share our discoveries with each other through the columns of the *Bulletin*.

It requires no expert knowledge of pewter to follow the lines of investigation suggested above. The expert or advanced collector may be able to add something, however little, to the information we need in order to "crack the case" of the so-called Love pewter or to effect a definitive distribution of the Thomas Danforth touches. Both of these enigmas are, in fact, receiving constant study and those engaged in this study are invited to make use of the *Bulletin* either as an agency for the pooling of information or a medium through which a case may be presented.

Returning from what may be to what is — a fall issue of the *Bulletin* is definitely planned, although material for it is still wanted, and the prospect of three *Bulletins* during the coming year appears to carry with it a reasonable hope of fulfillment.

Dead End Streets

Research is, alas, not always fruitful in the positive sense. It should be borne in mind, however, that even negative results have their value. More important still is the fact that we owe exactly as much gratitude to those able workers whose efforts lead but to a cul-de-sac as we do to those whose efforts lead us to the broad highway of an important discovery. Here is presented a small account of a research project beginning with the initial clicking of the Geiger counter, metaphorically speaking, and ending with the finding that no uranium ore was present in more than negligible quantity.

During the winter our indefatigable and indispensable contributor, Ronald F. Michaelis, of London, submitted the following notes:

"In my searches through the 'Bindings of Apprentices' in the records of The Worshipful Company of Pewterers, of London, I came across the two following entries which have some especial interest to American collectors:

WILLIAM FONT LE ROY. Son of More Font le Roy, of Virginia, a merchant, deceased. Bound to Charles Seddon, (pewterer of London), on 1st. June, 1674, for 7 years.

"There is no trace of his having obtained his 'freedom' or, in fact, of his having even completed his apprenticeship, but there is, of course, the possibility that he returned to America and that he exercised the trade of pewterer there."

ROGER GILLIGAN (also spelt GILIGAN). Son of Ferdinando, deceased of Virginia, in America.

Bound to Henry Adams, (pewterer of London), on 11th. May, 1700, for 7 years.

"As in the former case, there is no trace of his having obtained his 'freedom' or of having completed his apprenticeship. He, also, may have returned to America and traded as a pewterer. Collectors with access to Virginia records may find some opportunity of examining the files for trace of these men and if anything results the writer would be obliged for details."

The next step was to alert Eric deJonge, a man who can always be relied upon to do much more than take his "turn at the wheel". Since Mr. deJonge was shortly to speak on the subject of pewter at the Antiques Forum in Williamsburg, Virginia, he

took this information with him and placed it in the extraordinarily capable hands of Mrs. Rutherford Goodwin of Colonial Williamsburg. Her beautifully documented report contained, in the case of William Font le Roy (or Fauntleroy as it appears in the Virginia records), references to no fewer than ten volumes of records and, with respect to one volume in particular, no less than fourteen separate page references.

The records indicate clearly that William Fauntleroy could *not* have completed his seven year apprenticeship and was entirely unlikely to have ever worked as a pewterer in Virginia. He was born circa 1655 and would therefore have been about nineteen years of age at the time his apprenticeship is supposed to have begun in 1674. However, he was married in Virginia in 1678, four years later. His father, Moore Fauntleroy, died in 1663. Since the father was an owner of large landholdings and the son was his heir, it seems altogether probable that William Fauntleroy returned to Virginia upon coming of age — about 1676 — to inherit his father's estate.

In the case of Roger Gilligan, the records offer no clue at all. A Ferdinando Gilligan, the name of Roger's father, is listed as owning 182 acres of land in Norfolk County in the year 1704. Since, in the English records of apprenticeship, Roger Gilligan's father is listed as "deceased" in 1700, the Ferdinando Gilligan listed as a land-owner in 1704 seems to be eliminated as a candidate for the position of Roger's father although he may have been a brother. No mention of Roger Gilligan occurs at all.

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