

The
PEWTER COLLECTORS' CLUB
of AMERICA

BULLETIN No. 40 — JANUARY 1959

VOL. 4 — No. 1

*American Pewter Porringers
with Flowered Handles*

By Percy E. Raymond

(Editor's Note: The following article is the second in a series of three to be reprinted in the Bulletin. It was written by the late Dr. Raymond for the *American Collector* and appeared in the November, 1947 issue of that publication. The concluding article of the series, "Old English" Porringer Handles, will be reprinted in the next issue of the Bulletin. The editor is deeply indebted to Dr. Adelbert Abbott and Mrs. Henry Borntraeger for providing the all but unobtainable copies of the *American Collector* for this purpose.)

France and Germany boast of their decorated covered-porringers done in the best baroque and rococo styles. Their silver and pewter smiths did all that they could to make this kitchen utensil "pretty" enough to come to the dining table or sideboard. Yet it remained for New England to produce an eared-bowl at once appropriate for common use and attractive to the eye. Most American silver porringers have thin handles which might have been cut out, and perhaps were, with tinner's shears. But since pewterers did not need to skimp their metal, they were able to produce a vessel inexpensive enough to be bought by the dozen and decorative enough to make a handsome showing when hung from the shelves of a dresser.

The name, flowered-handle, was first brought to light by Mr. Ledlie I. Laughlin, who found in the inventory of the Newport, Rhode Island, pewterer, David Melville, the following:

"Beer pint Porringer do [a mold] plain and flowered." Fortunately there is no ambiguity as to what is meant by flowered, for Melville

seems to have made only two types of handles for his large porringers—the plain (often called solid), and the pierced, with gracefully curved scrolls enclosing large openings (fig. 10, 15).

At first glance all flowered handles seem to be alike, but critical analysis shows that there is considerable variation. Each mold-maker introduced some modifications into the original design, a fortunate thing for us if we wish to identify unmarked specimens. This article does not claim to be definite, for the writer has seen only a limited number of such handles. The features which seem most important are:

1. The large handles, beer-pint size, and those of the intermediate, wine-pint size, have 6 pairs of apertures. The smaller ones, approximately a quarter pint, have only 5 pairs. To facilitate reference, the pairs of apertures nearest the bowl and farthest apart (as in fig. 1), may be numbered 1. Nos. 2 are close together below the shield, and Nos. 3 outside them. Nos. 4 are beside the shield, and Nos. 5 laterally above it. Above them are Nos. 6, between but somewhat above them is the only opening on the median line. Since this latter

opening is useful in hanging the vessel, I have, for brevity, called it the hanger.

2. The shield (fig. 1B), which in many cases carries the touch, is supported below by a stalk which may be called the lower spindle (fig. 1A). The lower spindle may be narrow or broad, plain or with lateral nodes.

3. The shield may be entire below. Or it may be encroached upon by openings No. 2, in which case there is a pair of indentations on each side. Such a shield is said to be indented below. The shield also may be modified by openings No.

4, in which case it is laterally indented. Above, it may be convex or invadated by lobes of apertures No. 5, in which case it is superiorly indented.

4. Above the shield is the upper spindle, which may be narrow or broad, convex or concave sided, indented, or nodose (fig. 1C).

5. The hanger (fig. 1D) may be circular, oval, a pointed oval, diamond-shaped, or quatrefoil.

6. The quatrefoil hanger is variable in shape, and its form is important.

The confluent foils may be rounded (figs. 5, 6, 7), or angular (figs. 8, 9, 12), and the resulting cusps may be rounded projections or so subdued that they are almost non-existent.

7. The bracket may be New England linguiform (fig. 5), linguiform with V (fig. 11), triangular (fig. 2), or half oval (fig. 16).

These porringer were made in such quantities in Newport and Providence that they have come to be known by the name "Rhode Island." Their place of origin is actually unknown but the present indications are that Joseph Belcher, Sr., of Newport (1769-1776) was the first to make them. His mold appears

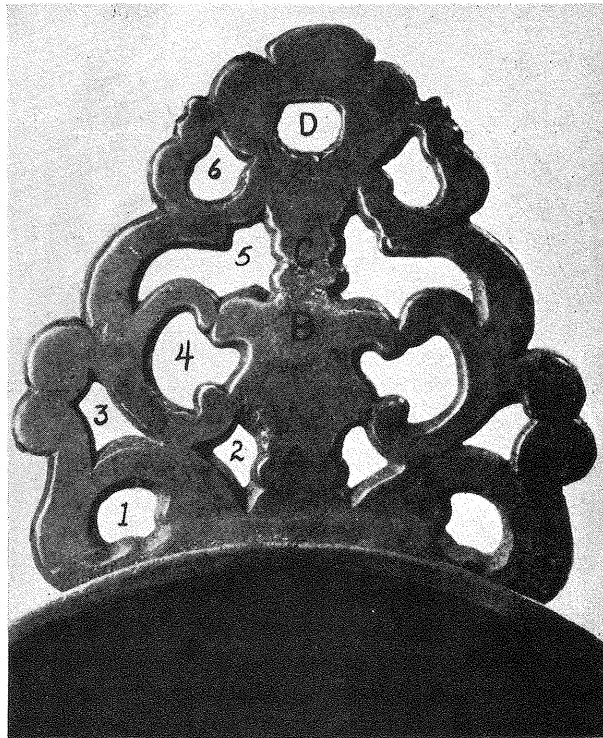
to have passed to David Melville about 1776. Samuel Hamlin, their most prolific producer, was at work in Providence as early as 1771, so he may have a claim for the credit. The oldest possible candidate in Connecticut was Thomas Danforth III, who started for himself in 1777. But he and Hamlin were trained by Thomas Danforth II, and it is barely possible that the pattern originated in Middletown.

The DANFORTH MOLD — Thomas Danforth III, Edward Danforth and Josiah Danforth all seem to have used the same mold (figs. 5,

6). The convex sides of the upper spindle and the two circular apertures allow instant recognition. The handle of the Richard Lee porringer basin is the Danforth type but has a diamond-shaped hanger.

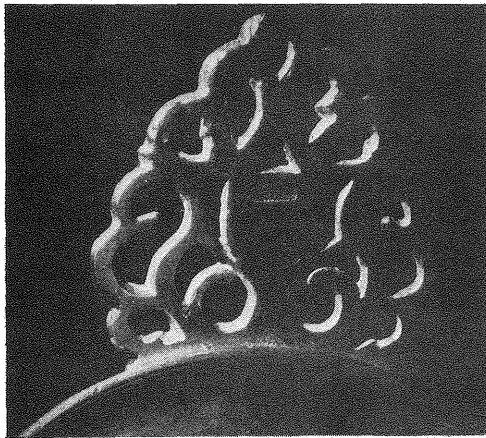
HAMLIN, JONES, KEENE MOLDS — Although Samuel Hamlin and Gershom Jones were in partnership for about seven years (1774-1781), they seem never to have had a joint touch. It is probable that Jones had none of his own till 1781. Their porringer handles are so similar that one can distinguish them only by looking at detailed

features. Both show a pair of shallow, almost triangular flat-bottomed excavations near the bowl (figs. 7, 8, 9) and both have narrow lower spindles with one pair of nodes, Samuel Hamlin and Gershom Jones each made specimens with a wide laterally indented upper spindle and each used the quatrefoil with rounded foils (fig. 7), though Jones also used the type with angular foils (fig. 8). With the wide upper spindle, Jones had an angulated quatrefoil. With the rounded quatrefoil there is a narrow spindle.

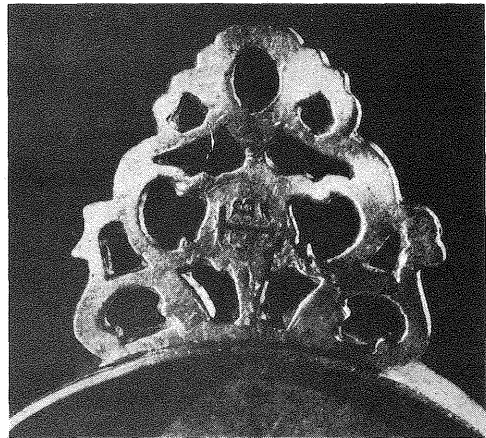


—Collection of the Author

1. A flowered-handle pewter porringer, type I, with six pairs of apertures. Legend: A, lower spindle. B, shield. C, upper spindle. D, hanger. 1 to 6, paired openings.

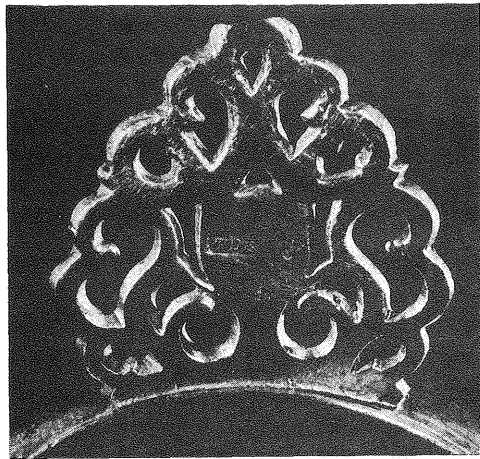


—Mr. Melville T. Nichols

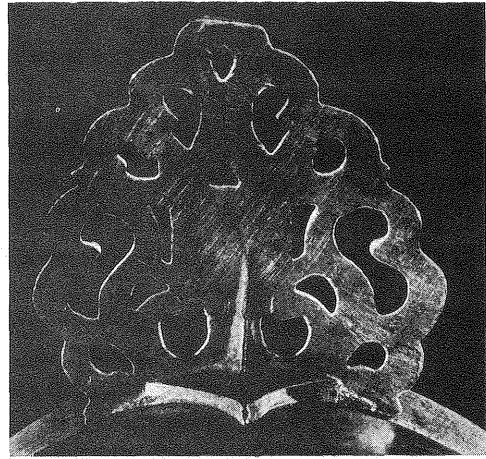


—Mr. Joseph France

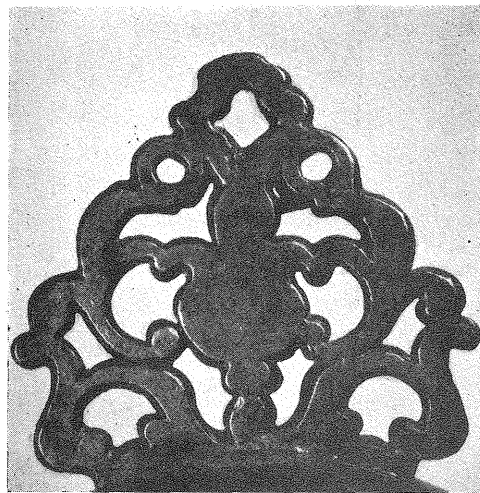
2. Left: Richard Lee's modification of the flowered handle—a triangular aperture above the shield in addition to six pairs of apertures. The bracket is triangular. 3. Right: Medium-sized porringer by William Billings. Lower spindle plain, tapering downward. Note the concave sides of upper spindle.



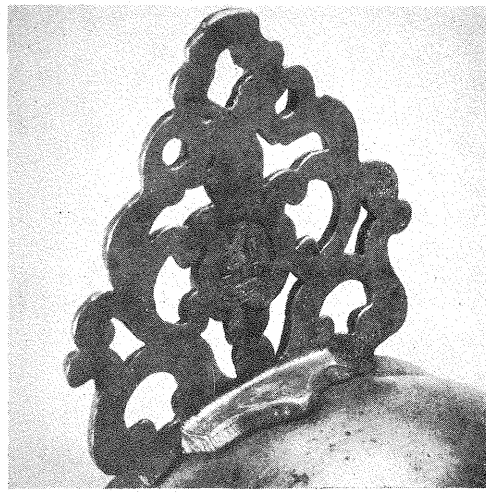
—Mr. Joseph France



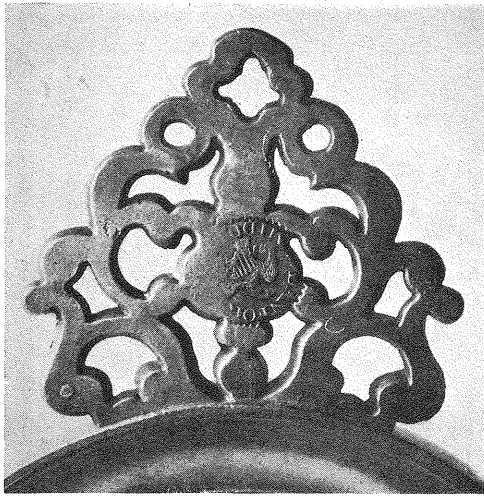
4. Front and back views of a flowered handle made by T D & S B. Comparison with fig. 2 shows clearly that this mold was either acquired from Richard Lee or copied from his mold. Plain to see, the form of the bracket is triangular.



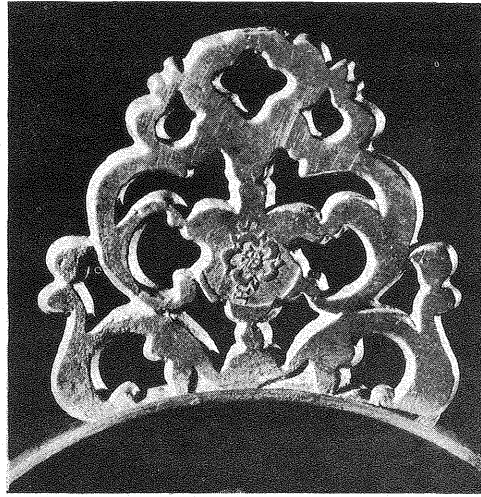
—Mrs. Stephen Fitzgerald



5. Front and back views of the flowered handle of a unique porringer made by Thomas Danforth 3d. Apertures No. 6 are circular, the hanger quatrefoil and the confluent foils rounded. New England Linguiform bracket.



—Mr. Melville T. Nichols

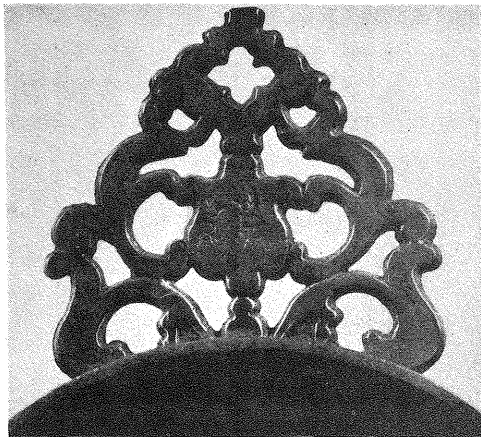


—Mr. Joseph France

6. Left: Unique porringer made by Josiah Danforth using the same mold as fig. 5. The convex sides of the upper spindle and the circular apertures No. 6 offer quick recognition. 7. Right: A flowered handle made by Samuel Hamlin. "Upper spindle indented; excavations near bowl," rounded quatrefoil hanger.

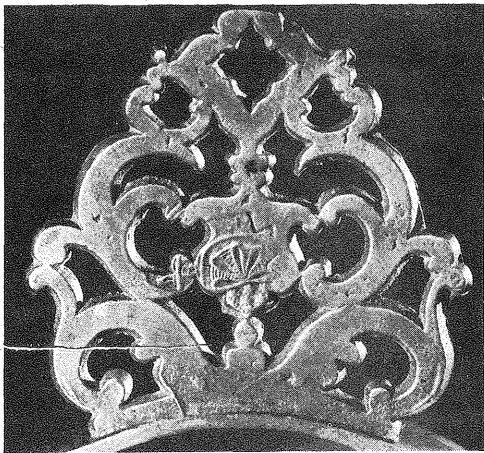


—Mr. Joseph France

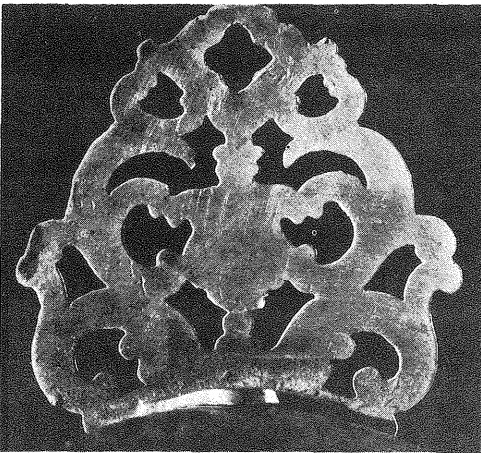


—Collection of the Author

8. Left: Flowered handle by Gershom Jones. Very similar to the Samuel Hamlin handle in fig. 7, except that here the confluent foils are angular. 9. Right: Unmarked handle probably by Gershom Jones; more finished than his marked example in fig. 8.



—Mr. Joseph France



10. Front and back views of a flowered handle by David Melville with his "made in Newport" touch. The upper spindle is wide, with two pairs of nodes; outlines of apertures No. 5 end in vertical arrow heads; the hanger is quatrefoil, angular.

These are small points of difference but they show that each had his own molds.

Samuel Hamlin was succeeded by his son, Samuel Ely Hamlin, who had worked with him during his life-time and who naturally took over his molds. The standard Hamlin product seems to have been the large handle with triangular excavations near the bowl, and with either quatrefoil (fig. 7) or circular (fig. 13) hanger. Mr. Melville T. Nichols has a wine pint specimen by Samuel, Jr., which has a handle with no excavations near the bowl, a transversely elongated quatrefoil hanger, and a pair of nodes on the upper spindle (fig. 14). This sort also may have been made by Samuel, Sr., but it is reasonably certain that the fourth Hamlin flowered handle was made by Samuel, Jr., only. It is a rather thin undistinguished affair, about $1\frac{5}{8}$ inches long. It has only five sets of paired openings; its lower spindle is rather broad and nodeless, and its upper spindle is narrow with a pair of sharp nodes. The hanger is quatrefoil, the shield not indented (see Laughlin, pl. XLIX, fig. 338). I have an unmarked specimen like this, except that the hanger is small and almost circular.

Gershom Jones also made a small porringer handle with only five pairs of openings (fig. 17). At first glance one suspects that it is the large handle with the lower portion cut off and somewhat patched. The shield is almost in contact with the bowl. The openings differ considerably in shape from those of the large handles, and the upper spindle has nodes instead of indentations.

The one Josiah Keene flowered handle is of the Hamlin type but so crudely cast and finished that one is not sure whether it came from the same or another mold. It differs from the usual Hamlin, however, in that it lacks the triangular excavations. The chief resemblances are in the shield and spindles (see Louis G. Myers, p. 49).

BELCHER, MELVILLE, CALDER, BOARDMAN MOLDS — David Melville (1776-1793) gets credit for the name flowered handle yet there is no indication that he originated it. One of his handles has been illustrated by Mr. Laughlin (pl. XLVIII, fig. 323). The general design is like that of Hamlin and Jones but there are no triangular excavations near the bowl.

The upper spindle has two pairs of nodes, and, although there are indentations at the top of the shield, it is smooth below. The bracket is the New England linguiform with V.

This handle, except for the D X M on the bracket, is identical with that made by Thomas Danforth Boardman, T. D. and S. B. (fig. 11) and Boardman and Co. The Boardmans may have acquired the Melville mold; if not, they copied it most accurately. This type of handle, as made by Melville, bears the D anchor M touch.

Mr. France has a specimen with the "Made in Newport" touch which must have been poured in another mold. The designs are similar but the shield of this example has shallow indentations below and none above. The spindles are narrow, and, although the upper one has two pairs of nodes, they are small and of equal size. A conspicuous feature is in the outline of openings No. 5, the inner portions of which turn vertically upward and end in arrowheads (fig. 10).

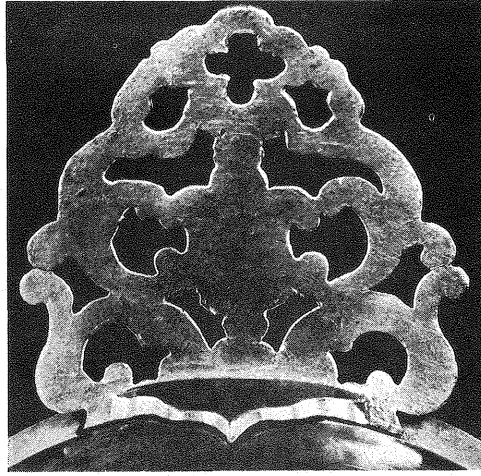
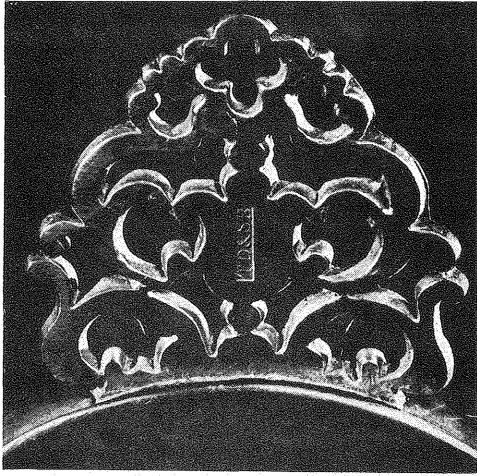
This mold seems to have gone to William Calder (fig. 12), for Mr. France has one bearing his eagle and showing the same peculiarities (see also Laughlin, pl. L, fig. 350).

The back of a Joseph Belcher handle has been figured (Laughlin, pl. XLVII, fig. 313) and Mr. Laughlin has furnished me with a rubbing of the upper surface. It is an "arrowhead" handle, seemingly identical with that of David Melville. Considering their dates, it seems probable that Joseph Belcher sold the mold to Melville instead of passing it along to Joseph, Jr.

Melville had another flowered-handle mold, for Dr. Madelaine R. Brown has a porringer with the large anchor and stars touch (fig. 15). All the elements are unusually slender and graceful, and each spindle has a single node. The hanger is transversely quatrefoil angular.

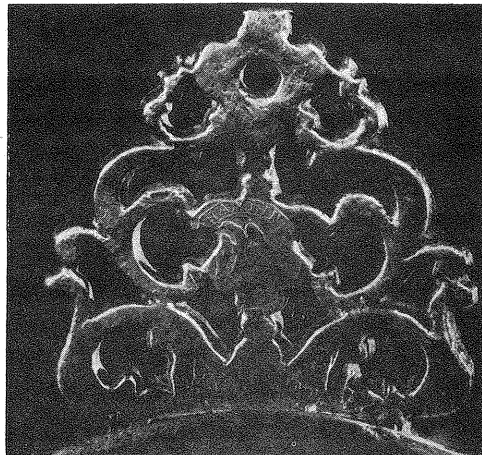
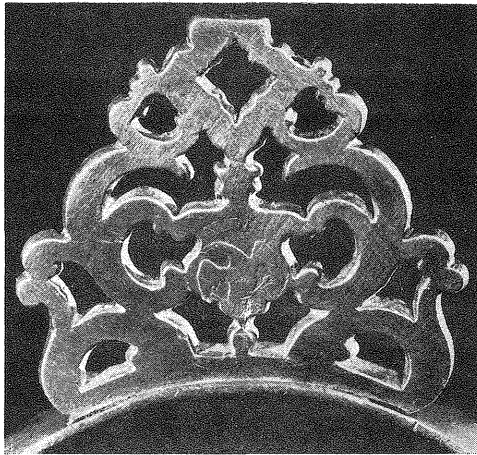
Mr. Laughlin's unique double-handled, footed covered-porringer (Laughlin, pl. XI, fig. 55) has a similarly light construction but the narrow upper spindle has two nodes, and the greatest width of the hanger is vertical. The apertures No. 5 are of the "arrowhead" type. One suspects that it is a Melville product.

In addition to his large arrowhead handle, Calder had a smaller, simple one with no



—Mr. Joseph France

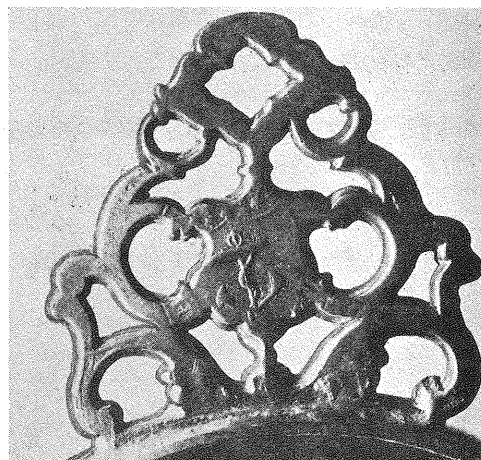
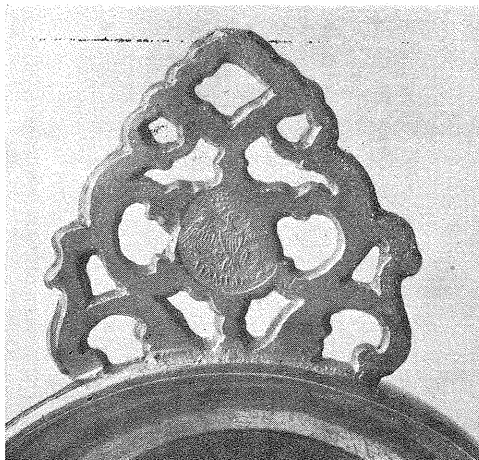
11. Front and back views of a typical "Newport" handle by T D and S B. Note the New England linguiform bracket with V.



—Mr. Joseph France

—Mr. Joseph France

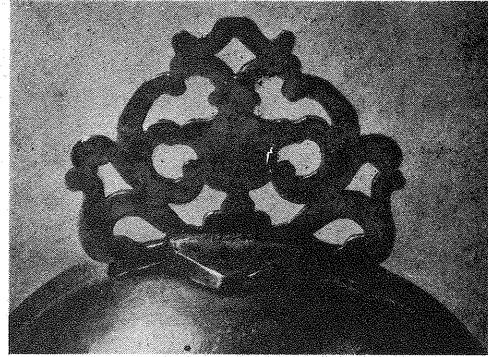
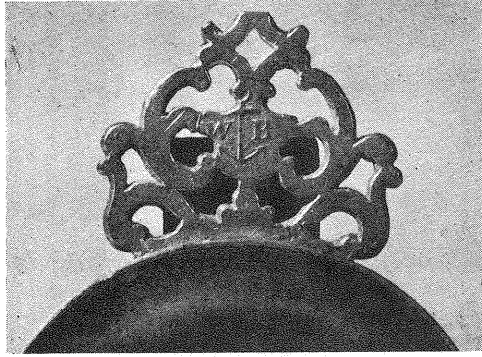
12. Left: The Melville mold was acquired or copied by William Calder as may be seen by comparing fig. 10 with this flowered handle by Calder. 13. Right: An unkempt handle by Samuel Ely Hamlin. Circular hanger.



—Mr. Melville T. Nichols

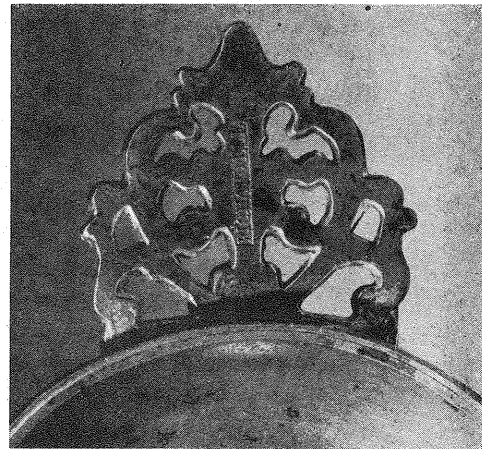
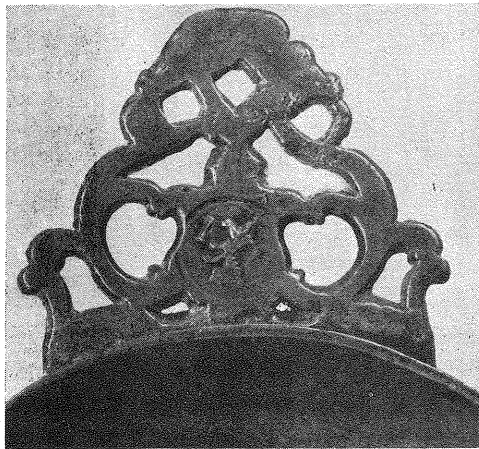
—Dr. Madelaine R. Brown

14. Left: A wine-pint porringer by Samuel Ely Hamlin, its flowered handle showing no excavations near the bowl. Note single pair of nodes on both spindles and transversely elongated quatrefoil hanger. 15. Right: A Melville flowered handle proving that he had another mold. All the elements here are slender and the hanger is transversely quatrefoil angular.



—Mr. Melville T. Nichols

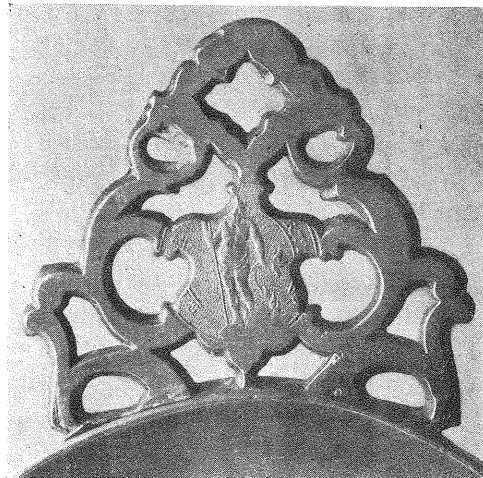
16. Front and back views of a small porringer with flowered handle by William Billings with only five pairs of apertures. Note the semi-oval bracket and angular quatrefoil hanger. Compare with fig. 3.



—Dr. Madelaine R. Brown

—Mr. Melville T. Nichols

17. Left: A small porringer made by Gershom Jones with five pairs of openings. Compare with fig. 8, also by Jones. 18. Right: Richard Lee's small flowered handle, individualistic as usual. The upper spindle shows a pair of nodes; the sides of the lower spindle are concave above, shouldered below.



18. This flowered handle is typically Rhode Island yet has the touchmark of an English pewterer, Edgar, Curtis & Co., of Bristol (1793-1801).

nodes on either spindle. The hanger is pointed oval and the bracket almost half-oval. Mr. Joseph France has a specimen by William Billings which may have come from the same mold (fig. 3) although there are small differences, due perhaps to careless workmanship. It is rough, whereas Calder's examples are well finished, clean cut and almost too smooth.

Billings made a still smaller handle with only five pairs of apertures, Nos. 6 being left out (fig. 16). It is similar to the small one made by Samuel E. Hamlin, except that it is wider, plainer, and with an angulated quatrefoil hanger.

KEY TO AMERICAN PEWTER PORRINGERS WITH FLOWERED HANDLES

(Except as noted, all have New England linguiform brackets.)

I. LARGE OR MEDIUM-SIZED HANDLES WITH SIX PAIRS OF APERTURES.

1. Upper spindle, plain, with concave sides.
 - a. With a triangular aperture above shield. Bracket triangular. Richard Lee (fig. 2), T D and S B (fig. 4).
 - b. No extra aperture on median line; lower spindle plain, tapering downward. Medium size. William Calder, William Billings (fig. 3).
2. Upper spindle plain, with convex sides.
 - a. Handle triangular; hanger diamond-shaped. Porringer basin. Richard Lee.
 - b. Apertures No. 6 circular. Hanger quatrefoil, angular. Edward Danforth, Thomas Danforth 3p (fig. 5), Josiah Danforth (fig. 6).
3. Upper spindle laterally indented; lower with one pair of nodes.
 - a. Upper spindle wide; hanger quatrefoil, rounded. Triangular excavations near the bowl. Samuel Hamlin (fig. 7) and Samuel Ely Hamlin.
 - b. Upper spindle wide; hanger quatrefoil, angular. Triangular excavations near the bowl. Gershom Jones (fig. 8).
 - c. Upper spindle wide; hanger quatrefoil, rounded. No excavations near the bowl. Josiah Keene.
 - d. Upper spindle narrow; hanger quatrefoil, rounded. Triangular excavations near the bowl. Gershom Jones.
4. Upper spindle wide, with two pairs of nodes; lower narrow, with one pair. Hanger quatrefoil, angular. Apertures No. 5 with vertical arrow heads. Joseph Belcher, David Melville (fig. 10), William Calder (fig. 12).
5. Upper spindle wide, with two pairs of nodes; lower wide, with one pair. Apertures No. 5 point inward. Hanger quatrefoil, rounded. Bracket New England linguiform, with V. David Melville, Thomas Danforth Boardman, T D and S B (fig. 11), Boardman and Co.
6. Upper spindle wide, with two pairs of nodes; lower even wider, with one pair. Hanger circular. Maker unknown (fig. 1).
7. Upper spindle narrow, with two pairs of nodes; lower wide, with one pair. Hanger circular. Triangular excavations near the bowl. Samuel E. Hamlin (fig. 13).
8. Upper spindle narrow, with one pair of angular nodes; lower with one pair of rounded ones. Hanger quatrefoil, transversely elongated. Medium size. Samuel and Samuel E. Hamlin (fig. 14).
9. Upper spindle narrow, with one pair of rounded nodes; lower narrow, with one pair.
 - a. Hanger quatrefoil, angular. Triangular excavations present. Maker unknown.
 - b. Hanger quatrefoil, angular. No excavations. All elements slender. David Melville (fig. 15).

II. SMALL HANDLES WITH FIVE PAIRS OF APERTURES, LOWER SPINDLE RESTING ON SHOULDERS.

1. Upper spindle wide, with one pair of nodes. Hanger quatrefoil, angular.
 - a. Lower spindle with convex sides. Bracket semi-oval. William Billings (fig. 16).
 - b. Lower spindle straight sided. Samuel E. Hamlin.
2. Upper spindle wide, angular. No lower spindle. Gershom Jones (fig. 17).
3. Upper spindle wide, with one pair of nodes; lower with concave sides. No hanger. Richard Lee (fig. 18).
4. Upper spindle with one pair of nodes; lower with convex sides. Hanger diamond-shaped. W. I. C. (Cowlshaw). Modern.

LEE, BOARDMAN MOLD — The Richard Lees were confirmed dabblers in porringer handles. The only true flowered one so far found is that on the well-known porringer-basin formerly in the Bowman collection (Laughlin, pl. XI, fig. 54). It is more nearly triangular than most. the upper spindle has convex sides and no nodes, and the hanger is diamond-shaped.

Another handle of Lee's (fig. 2) must, I suppose, be included in the flowered group, because it has six sets of paired openings. Yet it violates the rules, for it has a triangular opening on the median line, above the shield. The design is refreshingly different from that of all other handles of this type (Laughlin, pl. XII, fig. 58 — the circular hole in the shield does not belong.). The bracket is triangular,

whereas all other flowered handles have some variant of the New England type. This mold was acquired or copied by the Boardmans (fig. 4).

One of the Richard Lees made a small porringer basin ($3\frac{3}{4}$ ") with a handle which has no hanger, and but five pairs of apertures (fig. 18). The upper spindle has one pair of nodes; the sides of the lower spindle are concave above, shouldered below.

It will be noted that the flowered handle was not produced in New York or Pennsylvania, nor, so far as known, anywhere abroad. Neither does it seem to have had any prototype in silver.

Why, if the unexpected has to happen, does it happen so inopportunistically? This article, claiming that flowered handles were never made abroad, was in the process of being published when I stumbled on an English specimen (fig. 18). It is typically Rhode Island, even to the New England linguiform bracket, and the ear is cast on. The touch, Neptune (Poseidon) with a dolphin by the tail, is a beautifully executed bit of die-sinking. The mark was new to me, but Dr. Madelaine R. Brown and Mr. Ledlie I. Laughlin promptly identified it as that of Edgar, Curtis & Co., of Bristol, England, 1793-1801.

The question now arises as to whether the flowered-handle design originated in this country or in the English provinces. The pattern certainly was never popular in England, and it seems to have been used in this country by Joseph Belcher in Newport, R. I., before 1776. Merchants at Bristol, England, are well known to have catered to the American trade, so it is possible that Edgar, Curtis & Co. made this type purely for export.

On the other hand, we remember that the crown-handle was an English provincial design, which was more popular here in the States than in its original home.

The New York Regional Group

Activities of the New York Regional Group since the last report begin with a meeting on Saturday afternoon, February 15th, 1958, in

the Directors' Room of the New York Historical Society. "Pewter in the Pantry" was the subject listed for discussion on this occasion with the primary emphasis being placed upon kitchen utensils. Miss Edna Netter read a thoroughly prepared and informative paper on the historical aspects of the subject beginning with a reference to a pewter mustard pot in the year 1380 and delineating the ever increasing variety of forms to its culminating 19th century peak. Mr. James Monroe Brown, Jr., has the amazing ability to illustrate, with pieces from his extensive collection, whatever subject may be proposed. He brought to this meeting numerous examples of unusual pieces, commenting upon each in turn as it was shown. By way of extra measure or "lagniappe," as it would be called in New Orleans, Dr. Mallory brought to the meeting two pieces of outstanding interest — the coffee maker or drip-pot made by William Calder which was the subject of a recent Bulletin article by its owner, and a superb specimen of William Will's tall coffee pot, a form unique with Will and as imposingly handsome a piece of American pewter as may be found anywhere. This latter exhibit has a history (I am unable to say whether factual or legendary) which indicates that it was originally purchased by Thomas Jefferson who made a gift of it to a sister of Alexander Hamilton.

On May 3rd the New York Regional Group met at the New Jersey Historical Society in Newark. The election of officers was neatly and satisfactorily handled by the re-election of all incumbents. The topic on this occasion was "Pewter Drinking Vessels from Church, Home and Tavern". Eric deJonge and Dr. Robert Mallory divided the topic between them with Mr. deJonge covering the European aspect and Dr. Mallory the American. The talks were illustrated with both specimens and slides.

On Friday evening, November 14th, a dinner-meeting was held at the Washington Square Inn, New York City. I have complained, mildly enough although not without just cause, about the weather conditions which I invariably find in Washington Square. President Charles Edgecomb opened the meeting by lampooning my complaints. He accomplished this by the simple expedient of

reading my own words from the Bulletin but imparting to them a denunciatory flourish which was entirely his own. Mr. Edgecomb is highly skilled in the arts of speech and this bit of flummery was much enjoyed by those present, even though my personal feeling is that his manner was rather more suited to a Cicero addressing the senate upon his favorite subject, Cataline. I will refrain from comment upon the weather on this occasion other than to say that it was not as bad as expected. There is, however, one little suggestion which I should like to toss in Mr. Edgecomb's direction — he, likely enough, has very little control over the weather but, looking backward, I cannot help but note that these evening meetings are invariably scheduled for the period of darkness and I wonder if he would not care to give this situation some of his deepest thought and overcome this drawback if he possibly can. (Do not, friend Charles, read these lines to yourself or to others with any greater degree of seriousness than was employed in the writing of them).

The focal point of this meeting was a round table discussion of Britannia. The pros and cons of the subject were examined and the conclusion was reached, as inevitably happens in similar probes, that a large portion of the abuse which has been heaped upon the word "britannia" is totally unjustified. Mr. James Monroe Brown again brought a fine assortment of objects to highlight the discussion. Mr. Brown is getting to be so closely identified with a suitcase that it is difficult to visualize him other than in the act of packing or unpacking one.



BULLETIN 40
 JANUARY, 1959
 VOLUME 4
 No. 1

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The New England Regional Group

The New England Regional Group held a spring meeting in Hartford, Conn., on April 12th at the Wadsworth Atheneum. Those attending met beforehand on a "come-if-you-wish" basis for luncheon at the Old English Coffee Room of the Heublein Hotel. At the Wadsworth Atheneum the members were guests of Madame H. L. Berger, an Honorary Member of the P.C.C.A. and Curator-Emeritus of the Atheneum. Madame Berger was a pioneer in pewter research and the value of her exploratory work has been recognized in their books by both Kerfoot and Laughlin. Madame Berger spoke of her experiences in the pewter field and had arranged for examination some of the more significant of the pewter pieces which are housed in the Atheneum. The major business of the meeting was the adoption of a set of bylaws and at the close of the meeting a leisurely exodus was made through the rooms and corridors of the Atheneum where many antiquarian wonders are to be seen.

A fall meeting of the New England Regional Group, planned to be held at Watertown, Conn., became a casualty rather than an event when an eleventh-hour cancellation was precipitated as the result of illness in the immediate family of our intended hostess. This meeting, it is hoped, will be rescheduled at a future date. A meeting is arranged for February 28th at the Hotel Continental in Cambridge, Mass., at which there will be an election of officers and a discussion of sites and subjects for future meetings.

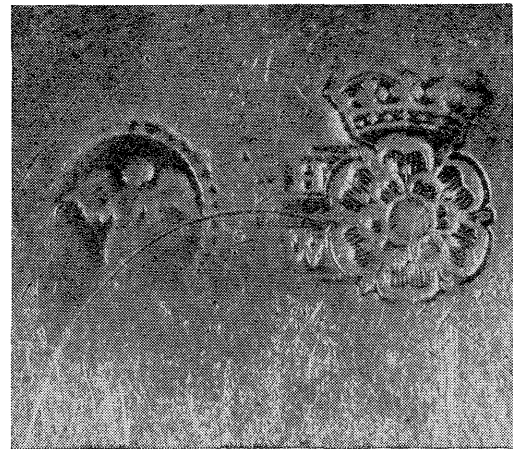
Pot Pourri

*"Things are seldom what they seem
Skim milk masquerades as cream
High-lows pass in patent leathers
Jackdaws strut in peacocks' feathers"*

With a tip of the bowler to Britain's most famous masters of minstrelsy we readily acknowledge the implication and introduce for your study and, we hope, comment concerning these three touches which have confounded our own admittedly feeble powers of deductive reasoning.

PROBLEM 1

This touch appears on a 9 inch ribbed brim plate acquired more or less as a curiosity in Delaware County, N. Y. and; as is a common experience to the collectors of the alloy, we were assured by the seller it had been in his family practically since Noah made his landfall on Ararat. Of course we would like to attribute it to YOU KNOW WHO on the assumption the touch just might have been made up from certain elements of his father's early touch design, but in pursuing this alluring concept several formidable obstacles appear. First and foremost, I cannot reconcile the design of the block letters HW with the alphabetical designs in current use during the working periods of the Wills. The cartouche (L. 482) which bears the John Will angel is of identical size, shape and border decor with that illustrated but, aside from the point that both angels face in the same direction, any further similarity is quite impossible to define owing to the fact that all John Will angels available to me are so badly erased as to preclude any further accurate comparison. The coronet of the problem touch appears quite identical with those of the John Will touches (L. 478 - 480) even to the fine lines extending



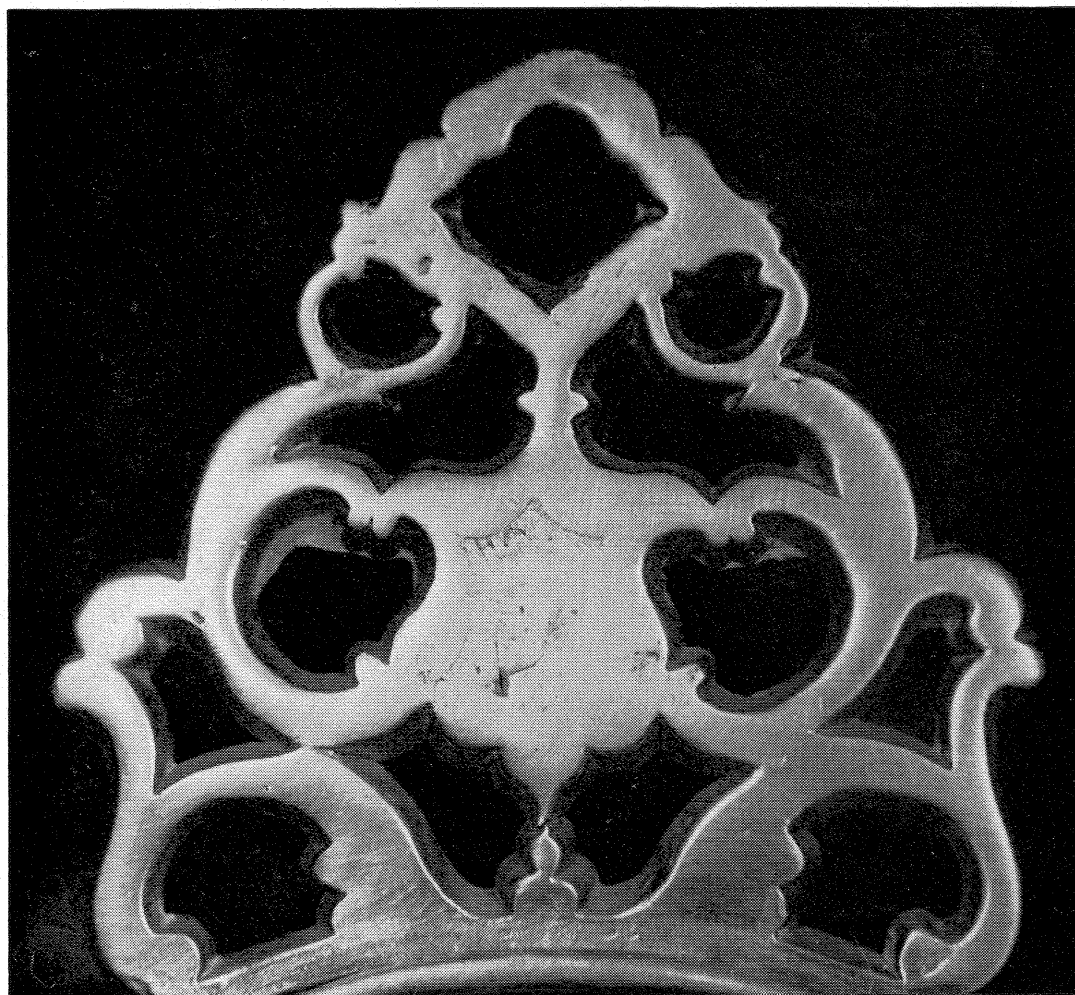
from the lateral base of the coronet to the upper petal of the conventionalized rose. But just here, and greatly to the detriment of my wishfully disposed argument, another serious variant appears in that the rose in the touch illustrated has six petals instead of the usual five as uniformly used by the early American

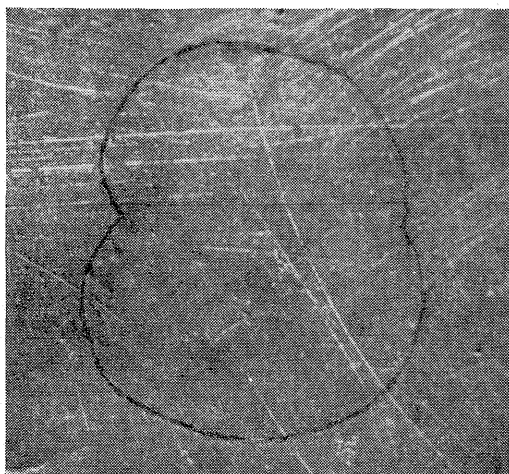
pewterers, including the Wills. While it may be wholly equivocal evidence and also subject to the possibility of oversight, it should be pointed out that a careful review of the literature, particularly that of Germany and the Low Countries, made at the Library of Congress yields no information whatever by which identification of the user of this touch can be established.

PROBLEM 2

According to the key for identification of makers of unmarked porringers devised by the late Dr. Percy E. Raymond now being published serially in the BULLETIN the flowered handle of the $4\frac{1}{2}$ inch porringer illustrated almost certainly came from a mold used by David Melville; the exceptionally large apertures contributing to its slender appearance. The hanger is transversely quatre-

foil and the bracket linguiform. Unfortunately this touch too is badly erased but a shield can be made out which resembles the shield design used by the several Melvilles. However, at the upper left segment of the shield the letters HA clearly appear, the rest of the name being completely erased. The question logically arises: is this a hitherto unrecorded touch attributable to either Hamlin? If so, how does it happen to appear on a handle reasonably attributable to David Melville? True, Samuel Ely Hamlin did own a very similar handle mold but its elements are much heavier and the apertures are smaller than those of the handle on which this touch appears. Of course, Newport and Providence are relatively neighboring communities and it is wholly within the bounds of possibility either of the Hamlins might have acquired the mold in question from the David Melville estate.





PROBLEM 3

Except for the outline which also is partially erased, this touch appears on the inside bottom of a $7\frac{1}{4}$ inch basin. It is illustrated, not because of any exceptional rarity, but because, at least in this writer's opinion, it seems to be possible to arrive at a quite reasonable attribution on the basis of circumstantial evidence, or evidence by indirection if you will. Perhaps the most important clue to its probable identity lies in the surprising information gained from the literature that insofar as I can determine only two American pewterers made basins of this particular dimension, and they were brothers, both resident in the Connecticut Valley. The touch incidentally conforms in size and configuration with that used by one of them.

NOW YOU TAKE OVER.

DR. ADELBERT C. ABBOTT

The Annual Meeting

The P.C.C.A. annual meeting of 1958 was held in Deerfield, Mass., on Saturday, May 17th. The business meeting with President Stanley Paddock as moderator followed immediately after a luncheon at the Old Deerfield Inn. The reports included excellent statements from the Treasurer and from Mrs. Philip Huntington who, as Chairman of the Membership Committee, introduced the names of twenty-nine new members who had

joined the P.C.C.A. during the year. A tribute to the late Dr. Percy Raymond and his inspirational and heroic services to the club was read into the record.

Mrs. Eaton H. Perkins of Melrose, Mass., was elected by acclamation to Honorary Membership in the P.C.C.A. Mrs. Perkins has been a member of the club since its inception, has held practically every office in the club and, like Dr. Raymond, has made perennial and invaluable contributions to the vitality of the organization.

Since the incumbent officers were midway through the two year term of office, there was no general election. Mrs. Philip Huntington was elected to the Board of Governors for a three year term as one of these offices is automatically vacated each year according to the plan of rotation of service under which this body functions. Mrs. Huntington thereby relinquished her former post as Chairman of the Membership Committee and Mr. Eric deJonge was elected as her successor.

The weather was certainly as fine as that provided by any of the preceding or remaining three hundred and sixty-four days of the year 1958 and, by common consent, everyone moved out of doors at the conclusion of the meeting and either inspected this extraordinarily distinctive town and its hoard of museum treasure or else reformed into confabulatory squads around the parked automobiles.

A Glimpse of Burrage Yale

The editor of the Bulletin depends in a very large measure upon the voluntary contribution of material for publication. He is, indeed, all but helpless without this. Therefore I have gotten into the habit of mentioning gratefully in my nightly prayers the names (among others) of Dr. Abbott, Eric deJonge, Charles Edgecomb, Dr. Mallory, Ronald Michaelis and, on alternate nights, Dean Fales. A new name has recently been added to this list, that of Mr. W.O. Brewer of Plainfield, New Jersey. In my present state of mind nothing can be too good for Mr. Brewer who has a most remarkable flair for finding in odd corners documentary material concerning pewter. He has also formed the praiseworthy habit of sending

these things on to me and thereby sharing his discoveries with the membership at large.

Mr. Brewer reaches into a compartment of an old desk and brings out a letter written by Burrage Yale. If anyone but he were to raise the lid of an old teapot and peer inside, he would find nothing but scale and the reddish residue which evidences the tea-bibbing of forgotten decades. Mr. Brewer, however, like the magician with empty hat and rabbit, reaches into the teapot and, without even bothering to say "hocus-pocus", produces important newspaper articles on pewter (Boston Sunday Herald) dating back to the year 1904. The story of the newspaper articles will be the subject of an article in the next Bulletin. The Burrage Yale letter is the subject of the present comment.

Mr. Brewer discovered this letter in Concord, Vermont, during the summer of 1958. It adds little if anything to the knowledge we already have concerning the activities of Burrage Yale but it is a most interesting document, nevertheless, in the fact that it adds the dimension of personality to a subject we had known previously only in the characterless definitions of chronology and locale. A letter, even a letter such as this, is full of the overtones produced by the personality of the writer and the reader, unless he suffers from what Clifton Fadiman has called "lockjaw of the imagination", is inevitably and irresistibly tempted to reconstruct the personality of the writer by "progressing backward" from the overtones to the fundamental.

Mr. William B. May, twenty-two years of age and living in Concord, Vermont, applied early in 1832 to Burrage Yale (South Reading, Mass.) for employment as a peddler or "trader", presumably in response to an advertisement offering such employment to "likely" young men. Yale's reply is shown here in photo reproduction and, for the sake of simplifying the reading of it, the text (minus a few commas) is printed as follows:

South Reading, Feby, 14, 1832

Sir,

I have received your letter of Jany. 30th and in reply observe that I am in want of smart, capable and industrious men to sell Tin, Block Tin and pewter wares, with such other articles as I may think proper, in

wagons about the country. The wages for a man and horse, for the first year, is fourteen dollars pr. month after which more is paid according to the ability of the individual for making a good trader; and I need hardly remark that, in order to become such, the person must possess much energy of character, honesty, industry and the most rigid economy. If you are satisfied of possessing such qualifications and can produce the recommendation of Mr. Hall, of Andover, which will be amply satisfactory, there is no doubt but a bargain can be made by calling at my place soon after the first of March and before all my wagons are engaged.

I remark that persons trading for me pay no taxes here and are exempted from military duty — and all their expenses of living and horse keeping, at home and abroad, are borne by me after first starting in my business. I will consider you engaged on the terms of my advertizement and this letter subject to all the rules and regulations of my business, as others are, upon receiving your compliance therewith by return mail, designating the fore part of any week in March next when you will be here.

Respectfully yours,
Burrage Yale

A postscript, not shown in the photograph, appears on the reverse side of the written page and reads as follows: "If you have any acquaintance with young men who wish to engage in my business, having all the qualifications necessary as described in my advertizement and this letter, there can be not much doubt of their finding employment here by applying the fore part of March, and especially before all my wagons are engaged, and producing satisfactory recommendations."

This is the letter of a well-educated and articulate man. It would be considered so were the letter written yesterday and the fact that it was actually written in 1832 makes the statement doubly impressive. It would appear that his business was a rather substantial one -- it had already been in existence for about twenty-five years when this letter was written. Ledlie Laughlin states that Burrage Yale "manufactured tinware and later britannia" but I think it quite likely that he was primarily engaged in the manufacture of tinware — this from the fact that he seems to indicate tin

South Reading Feb. 14. 1832

Sir,

I have rec^d. Your letter of Jan. 30th and in reply observe that I am in want of a smart, Capapable & industrious man, to sell Tin, Block Tin & pewter wares, with such other articles as I may think proper, in wagons, about the Country. The wages for a man & horse, for the first year, is fourteen dollars, pr. Month, after which, more is paid according to the ability of the individual, for making a good trader, and I need hardly remark, that in order to become such, the person must possess much energy of Character, honesty, industry, and the most rigid economy. If you are satisfied of possessing such qualifications I can produce the recommendation of Mr. Hall, of Andover, which will be amply satisfactory, there is no doubt, but a bargain can be made, by calling at my place, soon after the first of March, and before all my wagons are engaged.

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Respectfully Yours,
(Over) Burroughs Gale.

Mr. Wm. Ballay

and block tin as the major items of merchandise to be peddled plus the fact that no examples of either pewter or britannia bearing a touch of Burrage Yale have come to light. Still he seems to be identified with pewter at every turn in the road. Born in Meriden, Conn., he must be closely related to many Yales of that area who are mentioned in every reference book on American pewter. In 1808 he married Sarah S. Boardman and who can she be if not a sister to Thomas D. and Sherman S. Boardman whose mother was Sarah Danforth? One of Burrage Yale's first peddlers was Timothy Bailey who was later a partner in the firm of Bailey and Putnam of Malden, Mass. In 1835 Burrage Yale sold his business to Luther Boardman who had been his shop foreman for three years. Although this is armchair speculation, I should not be surprised to find that all, or almost all, pewter carried on and peddled from the wagons of Burrage Yale was made elsewhere as merchandise to be sold by him. Could he not have been an unofficial agent for the Boardmans and the distributor of their products around the countryside from his base at South Reading?

I am able to report that William B. May actually accepted the offer of employment by Burrage Yale and became, at least for a season, one of the traveling salesmen of that era. This is confirmed by a second letter found at the same time and in the same place by Mr. Brewer. This letter is addressed to William B. May at South Reading, Mass., and is dated June 17th, 1832. Written by a stay-at-home brother, James May, Jr., it is a very much less literate affair containing some unusual spelling and being completely unencumbered by any sort of punctuation. The writing sprawls badly and is, here and there, undecipherable but states, significantly, "I want you to write what you carry for loadings." These two letters are all that remain by way of evidence and I think it logical to assume that William B. May worked but a short time for Burrage Yale. He did return to Concord, Vermont, where he became a man of some prominence in his community, representing his town in the State Legislature (1847-1848) and also being a member of the Constitutional Convention in 1843.

This second letter, from James May, Jr., to his brother, has no connection at all with our subject of pewter save for the reference to "loadings." I should, nevertheless, like to quote from it as a sort of sequel since it is short and, if nothing else, it gives us a glimpse of life as it was lived over a century and a quarter ago in the rural areas near St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

There are no more than thirty lines in this letter which begins with stilted formality—"I take my pen to inform you that I am well and I hope these lines will find you in the enjoyment of the same blessing the folks are in tolerable health"—(in the magnificent understatement which is commonplace even today in rural New England, the word "tolerable" actually means remarkably good)—"I have no news of importance to write the season is verry backward corn is not yet large enough to weed there is a prospect of a good crop of grass"—etc. Having already indicated that his letter is going to be a dull and routine affair, James devotes the remainder of his letter to the relation, in a few brief statements, of what he calls a "circumstance" (finding once again the perfect word and calling the reader's attention to the fact that a curious and striking eloquence is quite often the virtue which accompanies the defect of inarticulateness). This "circumstance" concerns two young men named Josiah and Daniel who "went about 4 weeks ago to the Bushes house in company with a number of others to take Sterns the old smuggler and surrounded the house about daylight Sterns jumped from a window and run the two young — (undecipherable) were likely to overtake him when he turned and shot Daniel in the thigh near his boddy and he died in about 17 hours he presented another pistol to Josiah and he stoped and Sterns run for the woods and has not yet been taken write again soon for we want to hear from you often yours respectfully in haste."

To this letter is added eight lines or so in a charmingly neat and small hand written by one Mary Ann. Beginning with the salutation "Dear Cousin", this postscript also makes use of a severely formal phrase at the outset: "Having an opportunity I improve a moment in writing to you to inform you that I have not forgotten old Goosbery I am employed in teaching school in Lyndon. I am at Esq.

James (James May, Jr.) on a visit I came down on Friday and my horse got homesick and ran home last night but they have sent it back and I expect soon to be on my way to Lyndon. A line or two from old Goosbery would be very entertaining"—(here is another unusual word and I am reminded of an old story concerning two men meeting each other on the street; one asked, "Is your wife entertaining this season?" and the other replied, wearily, "Not very.")—"Belinda and I went to meeting today and heard Alexander Hindman published to Widow Winslow. I have not time to write farther so good night—Belinda received your letter last week and sends her love to you."

And here the whole story comes to an abrupt close. I suppose that investigation would disclose whether or not "Sterns the old smuggler" was finally taken and whether or not William May eventually married Belinda who was receiving letters from him and who sent her love. For my own part I should like to know a bit more about Widow Winslow who was "published"—did she win Alexander Hindman by means of potent personal charm or had the late Winslow left her a farm which looked good to Alexander?

W. D.

The Editor's Uneasy Chair

Everyone, including the editor, wants to see the Bulletin appear somewhat more frequently and certainly more regularly. There is a vital need for contributed material if both of these desiderata are to be fulfilled. The editor must have, in the first place, enough material to make up three healthy-appearing issues a year, which is as many as the club treasury will stand. In the second place, the material should be acquired at a rate of flow sufficient to permit the accumulation of at least a modest backlog. Heretofore, each Bulletin under my editorship has "shot the works" and the space between issues has reflected quite faithfully the length of time it has taken to gather enough copy for a new issue. The present issue is a case very much in point. Bulletin 39 was in the hands of the members in the month of May. At that time Dr. Raymond's article on porringer handles was the sole material on

hand for the present Bulletin. It was early December before any additional material reached me. I have solicited material, naturally, in quarters which I felt might be fruitful and have harvested the bloom, in the form of an impressive array of promises, rather than the fruit. About ninety per cent of the material which reaches me is actually unsolicited—I cannot say just what this signifies unless it is that a promise made is considered much as is a note at a friendly bank, subject to renewal at regular intervals and to eventual liquidation in the undetermined future.

The Bulletin is a co-operative project and I ask every reader to examine and weigh his individual share in the collective responsibility for the well-being of the Bulletin. I have had kind offers of help for which I am most appreciative. The editor's burden, however, would be light indeed if it were confined to the business of addressing and stamping envelopes. Nor can he share such burdens as the preparation of copy, the reading of galley and page proofs or those sessions with paste pot, scissors and dummy sheets where he, in glue-fingered frustration, attempts to put together an issue containing, with apologies to the New York Times, all the news that prints to fit. As I write these lines I find myself harking back—way back—to my years of collegiate experience and recalling for present use an old tribal chant of the period, a chant which begins with the words, "Don't bring me posies when it's shoesies that I need".

A few words in a less wistful vein—the next issue of the Bulletin will be an "Anniversary Issue" with a report on the twenty-fifth anniversary meeting at Williamsburg, Virginia. This issue will be sent to the printer soon after that meeting for there is just about enough material on hand at the moment to permit the preparation now of everything save the report of the doings at Williamsburg. This is not an invitation to relax, however, for the till will then be empty again.

This Bulletin is the first issue in a new Volume. An index of articles contained in Volume 3 (Bulletins 30-39 inclusive) is in preparation and will be issued as a supplement to Bulletin 39. Bulletin 29, it will be recalled, is made up entirely of an index to the articles contained in all previous issues.

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