The
PEWTER COLLECTORS' CLUB
of AMERICA

BULLETIN NO. 41 — SEPTEMBER, 1959 VOL. 4 — NO. 2

# *American "Old English" Pewter Porringer Handles*

*By* Percy E. Raymond

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the third and concluding article of the series on American pewter porringers written by the late Dr. Raymond for the *American Collector*. It appeared originally in the May, 1947, issue of that publication. The other two articles in the series were reprinted in Bulletins 39 and 40. The editor again expresses his deep gratitude to Dr. Albert Abbott and Mrs. Henry Borntraeger whose precious copies of the extinct *American Collector* were not merely loaned but sacrificed for this purpose.)

Porringers have been made for many hundreds of years by many peoples. Used for both food and drink, they were popular vessels in France, central Europe and England from the 14th till the middle of the 18th century. France appears to have been their native country. Certainly it is there that their history can be most completely traced. It was also in France that somewhat after 1750 they gradually evolved into the tureen, a pair of bail handles replacing the typical ears. The porringers made by Germanic peoples followed the French. England, ever susceptible to French fashions, gradually abandoned it as a general-utility vessel though it continued to survive there till modern times in hospitals as a bleeding bowl. It is probably partly because of this usage that the porringer became unpopular in England for the serving of food.

Although the making of porringers had almost ceased in Europe by American Revolutionary times they were at that period reaching the height of their popularity in New England and New York. Colonists, hewing their way into a wilderness, often retain customs already abandoned by their contemporaries in older regions. The porringer was used in these northern colonies for a variety of purposes. Porridge, soup or stew could be served in it and that it was used as a drinking vessel is shown by the names attached to various sizes: beer pint, wine pint, gill, etc. — a porringer was easily carried in the pocket when one went to the tavern, and one could know if he got his rightful portion of cider, beer or rum.

No one can say when the first porringer was made in this country but it is evident that they became increasingly popular from about 1750 to 1820 and then gradually went out of use. Since they were made so recently, many more of them have survived here than abroad. They were made in many sizes, from about 2⅛ to 5½ inches in diameter, and with many sorts of handles. The uses for the larger ones, from 4 to 5½ inches across, is readily understood but the reason for the small ones has never been fully explained. Some writers refer to them as tasters, though our ancestors were not growers of wine and it is doubtful if they had any great gustatory discrimination. The abundance of the small examples, most

of them made after 1800, suggests that they may have been employed in churches in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. On the other hand they may have been used for sipping small portions of strong drink. "Won't you have a taste?" it an expression still commonly used. G. J. Monson-Fitzjohn, speaking of wine-tasters in his book, *Drinking Vessels of By-gone Days*, brings out the idea that in England our ancestors used them in trying samples of the various concoctions they were in the habit of preparing.

Perhaps the most abundant American porringers are those with the handle which Mr. Joseph France and I have called the "Old English" type because it was prevalent in Great Britain. Its characteristic feature is the presence of an inverted heart-shaped opening above the shield.

Fortunately the majority of American porringers bear the touches of their makers but many unmarked examples, equally well designed and equally satisfactory to the collector, are to be had. It was with the thought that these specimens might be identifiable that the writer has undertaken a detailed study of the various sorts of handles. To describe them it had been necessary to use a number of technical terms, which may be listed here.

The section that contained the food or drink is usually called the bowl, using the word in its general sense of something concave. The most common American ones have convex sides with a flattened flare flange at the top and a convex elevation, or boss, of considerable size in the bottom. These have been called boss-porringers by various English and American writers. They might better be called flanged bowls, for bosses are present in other sorts. Many porringers, particularly the European ones, have plain bowls with straight or gently convex sides, a plain edge, a thickened rim, or a narrow brim. Mr. Laughlin has used the term porringer-basin for specimens with a brim (fig. 8). Perhaps we should use the terms brimmed- and brimless-basins for such bowls. Many French and a few English porringers have a circular foot, but so far as I know, such were not made in America.

In England the Worshipful Company of Pewterers ordained that porringer handles be cast in a piece with the bowls. This ordinance seems to have been difficult to enforce; nevertheless it was the regular custom on the Continent and was followed in this country by the pewterers of southeastern Pennsylvania. Many of the English handles were soldered on, a poor practice, for it left a distinct line of weakness. To overcome this weakness most American makers, and a few of the English, introduced brackets for additional support. The simplest such bracket may be called the wedge. An extra amount of solder was put on and allowed to remain, being smoothed off for appearance sake. This evolved into a wedge-shaped thickening of the inner end of the handle itself (fig. 3). Occasionally, though rarely, the wedge was reinforced by a pointed piece of metal on the median line, thus producing the wedge-and-triangle (fig. 4).

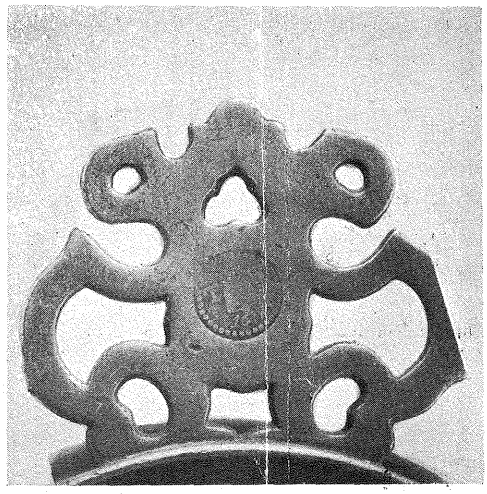
A stronger support was obtained by extending the wedge downward, making the whole triangular (fig. 5). This sort of bracket is found on some English porringers and it may have originated there. It was used by all the New York pewterers and by many in New England.

The New Englanders, however, had a bracket of their own, the one which commonly has been called the "Rhode Island." It may have originated there or, perhaps, in Connecticut. At any rate, its presence does not necessarily indicate that the piece originated in Rhode Island. Hence Mr. France and I have ventured to rename it the New England bracket (fig. 7).

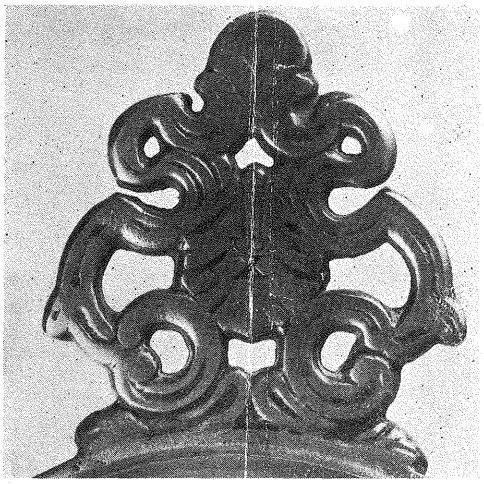
Most of these types of brackets were used by the makers of "Old English" handles but the triangular bracket was the one most commonly employed. It is on the smaller ones that we find the wedge and wedge-and-triangle, and the Hamlins are, so far as known, the only makers who used the New England linguiform.

All porringers with "Old English" handles are small, the capacity of the largest being 12 fluid ounces, a "wine pint".

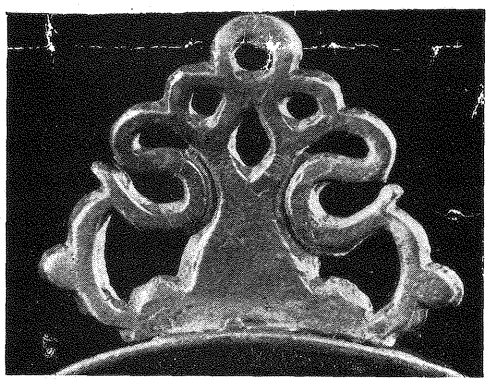
Most "Old English" handles have three sets of paired openings but due to careless casting or finishing, the metal at the sides may run together so that the openings appear to be four or five. There are one or two makers who intentionally produced handles with

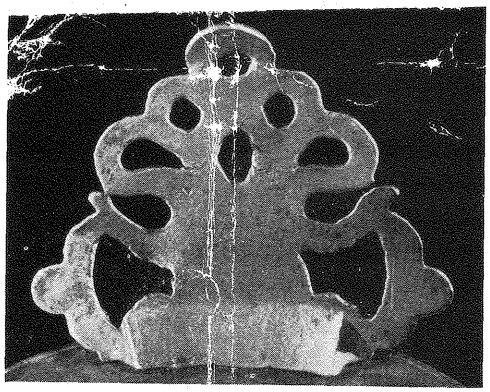


—*Author's Collection*
1. *"Typical Old English" pewter porringer handle by Thos. Waight of London, circa 1710.*

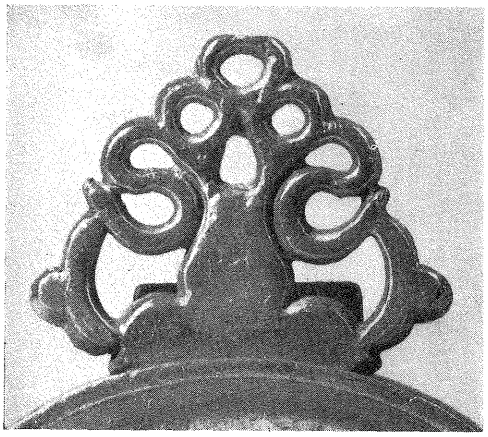


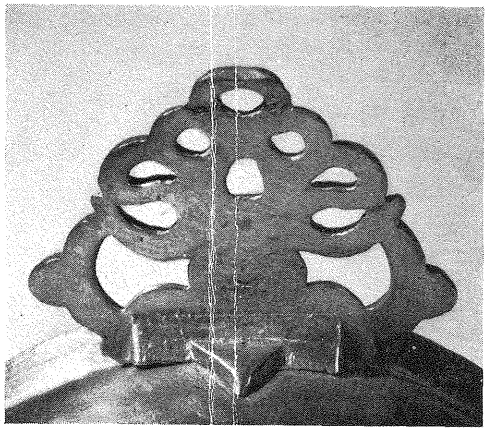
—*Author's Collection*
2. *A decorated "Typical Old English" handle. By George Beeston of London, c. 1760 (very late date for porringers made in England).*



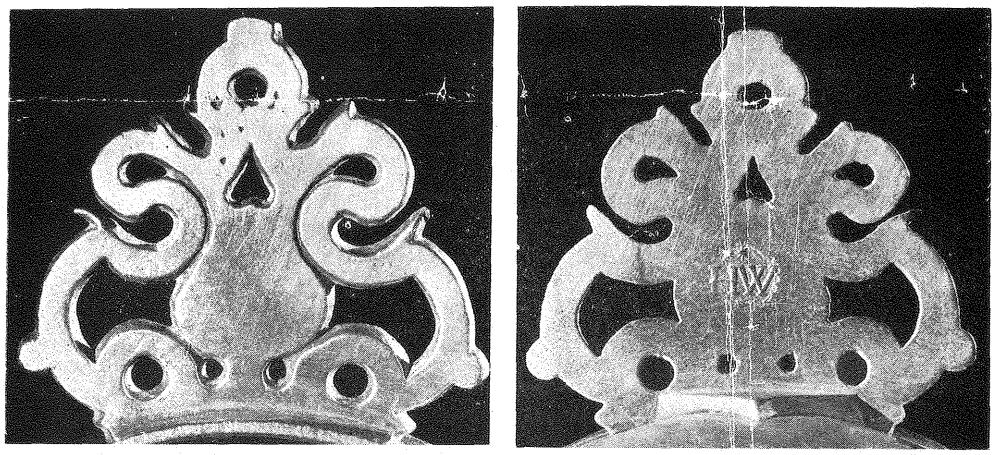


—*Collection of Mr. Joseph France*
3. *Front and back of a "Plain Old English" handle made in America by T D and S B. It shows the heart-shape aperture modified to an oval shape. Note wedge bracket.*



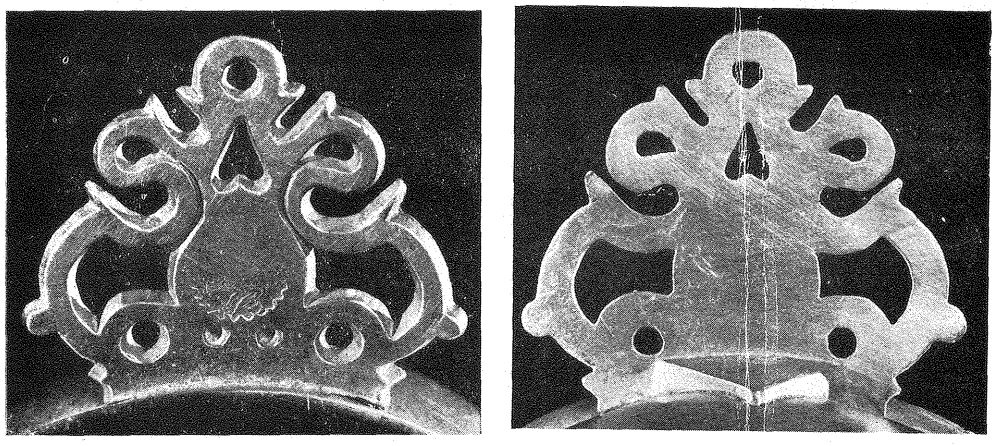


—*Collection of Mr. Melville T. Nichols*
4. *Front and back views of a "Plain Old English" handle similar to fig. 3 but with a wedge-and-triangle bracket. Unmarked but identified by key as probably by T D and S B.*



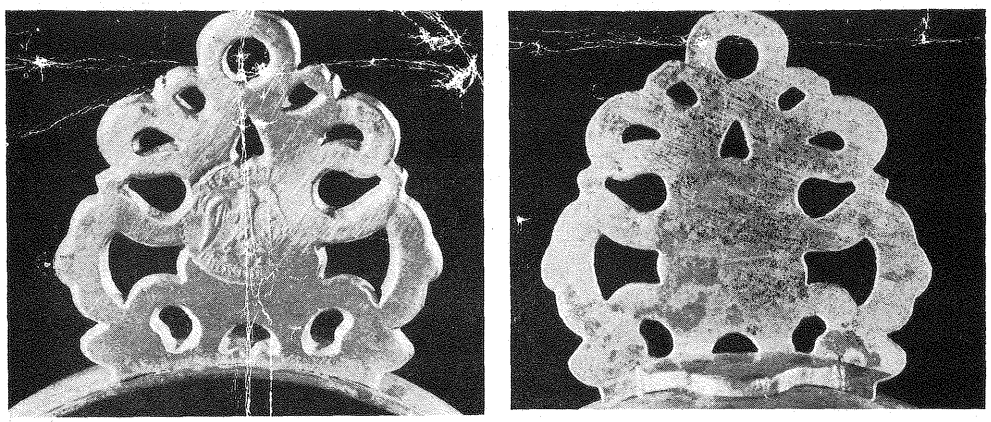
—*Collection of Mr. Joseph France*

5. *Front and back views of a "Plain Old English" handle in the New York style. By Henry Will. An uncommonly fine example. Triangular bracket. Note the four apertures near the bowl.*



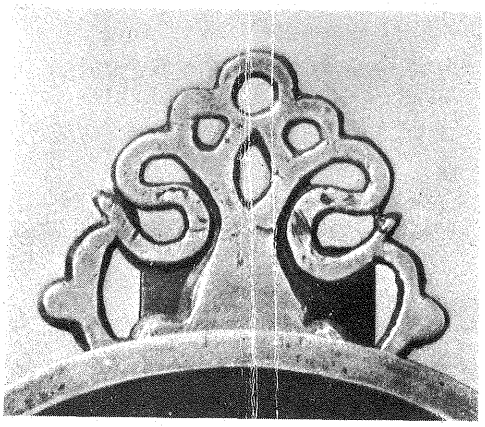
—*Collection of Mr. Joseph France*

6. *A New York-style handle by Samuel Danforth. Similar to Henry Will's handle but artistically less fine because the apertures next the bowl are less closely linked to the design.*

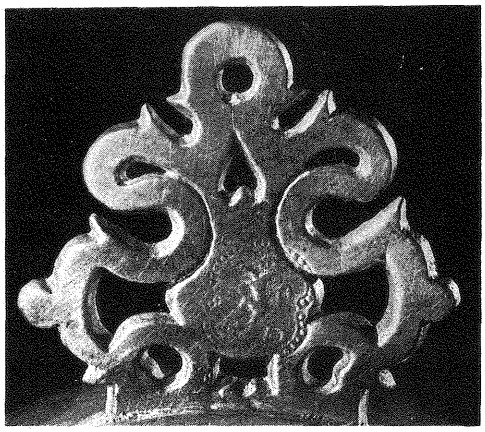


—*Collection of Mr. Joseph France*

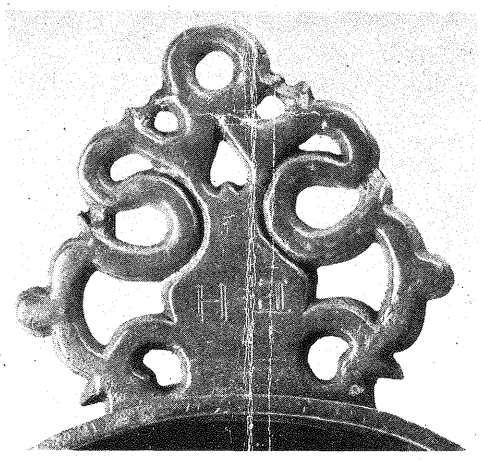
7. *Front and back views of a Hamlin-style "Typical Old English" handle. Made by Samuel Hamlin, Jr. Note the five sets of paired openings and the New England-type bracket.*



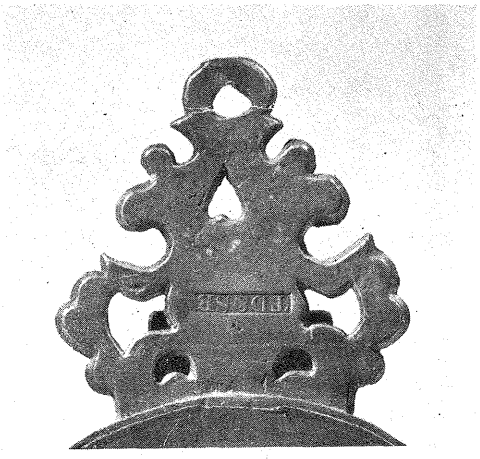
—*Collection of Mr. Melville T. Nichols*
8. *A "Plain Old English" handle made by Edward Danforth. On a small porringer-basin.*



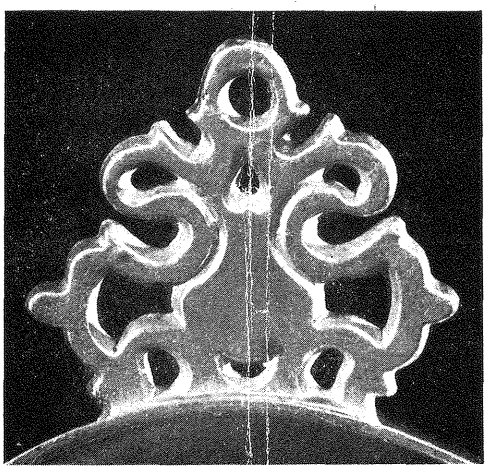
—*Collection of Mr. Joseph France*
9. *A "Typical Old English" handle by Edward Danforth. Note the rectangular aperture.*



—*Author's Collection*
10. *A "Plain Old English" handle, unmarked but identified by the key as a Frederick Bassett.*



—*Collection of Mr. Melville T. Nichols*
11. *A "Plain Old English" handle by T D and S B. Note that apertures no. 3 are not closed.*



—*Collection of Mr. Joseph France*
12. *Front and back views of a "Typical Old English" handle by E C. The bracket is semi-oval. Note that the lunate aperture next to the bowl is concave upward.*

KEY TO AMERICAN PEWTER PORRINGERS WITH "OLD ENGLISH" HANDLES
(All brackets triangular except as noted.)

I. PLAIN OLD ENGLISH. NO APERTURE ON MEDIAN LINE CLOSE TO BOWL

1. Apertures no. 1 absent, no. 4 present
   a. With wedge bracket (fig. 3). T D and S B
   b. Apertures no. 4 present. Wedge-and-triangle bracket (fig. 4). Unmarked. Probably T D and S B
   c. Apertures no. 4 present. Median opening a pointed oval in place of the inverted heart. Porringer basin (fig. 8). Edward Danforth
2. Apertures no. 1 present
   a. Apertures no. 1 kidney-shaped, with the axis horizontal. Apertures no. 3 and 4 not closed (fig. 11). T D and S B
   b. Apertures no. 1 kidney-shaped, obliquely placed; no. 3 closed (fig. 10). Frederick Bassett
3. Four apertures close to bowl, but none on the median line. New York-style handle
   a. Inner circular apertures connected with apertures no. 2 by grooves (fig. 5). Henry Will; Frederick Bassett
   b. Inner circular apertures not connected with apertures no. 2 (fig. 6). Samuel Danforth

II. TYPICAL OLD ENGLISH. AN APERTURE PRESENT ON THE MEDIAN LINE CLOSE TO THE BOWL

1. Median aperture subrectangular, concave above, straight below
   a. Apertures no. 3 and heart small. Francis I, or Francis II Bassett; Peter and William Kirby
   b. Apertures no. 3 and heart of normal size. Median aperture narrow. Francis I, or Francis II, or Frederick Bassett
   c. As in b, but median aperture wide. C P (unidentified)
2. Median aperture subrectangular, concave above, with median groove below
   a. With flange-boss bowl. John Danforth, Thomas Danforth III, Edward Danforth (fig. 9), Thomas Danforth Boardman, T D and S B
   b. With bossed, convex-sided bowl. T D and S B
3. Lunate median aperture close to bowl
   a. Convex upward, with median groove below. Five sets of paired openings. New England bracket (fig. 7). Samuel and Samuel Ely Hamlin
   b. Concave upward. Bracket half-oval (fig. 12). E C (unidentified)

four pairs, and the Hamlin design — which to a certain extent imitates the flowered handle — actually has five. These paired apertures may be numbered, starting from close to the bowl, as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Numbers 2, located opposite the middle of the shield, are the largest and most uniform in shape; they can be recognized even when numbers 1 are absent, as is the case in many of the small or "taster-size" examples.

In all examples there are two, and in some, three openings on the median line. The distal one is the circular hanger. Below it, and above the shield, is the inverted heart. The third, if present, is below the shield, close to the bowl. In most instances it is nearly rectangular (fig. 9), more rarely, crescent-shaped (fig. 7).

Early colonial pewterers must have been familiar with this type of handle. It probably was made in this country long before the days of the Revolution. So far as present evidence goes it was first used by New York pewterers. It and the crown-handled porringer were the only types employed by them. After the Revolution it was adopted in Hartford, Connecticut, and vicinity but its use seems not to have spread to other parts of New England. Samuel Hamlin's product, as will be mentioned, was a half-breed, though, as often happens, a very attractive half-breed. Curiously enough, Johann Christopher Heyne made at least one porringer with an "Old English" handle. His is the only known Pennsylvania example and Mr. Laughlin was not able to get a photograph of it.

The New York makers of pewter porringers with this type of handle consisted entirely of producers who liked to stamp their initials, surrounded by circles, on their product. They gave no thought to the trouble they were going to cause Mr. Kerfoot, Mr. Myers, Mr. Laughlin and Mr. Poole, not to mention numerous other collectors who have not relieved their feelings in print.

If we knew that F B (Laughlin, pl. LIX, fig. 456) was Francis Bassett, Sr., 1718-1758, and not Francis, Jr., 1754-1799, we could think it was he who first introduced the "Old English" handle in America. The de-

sign is typically English as may be seen by comparing Laughlin's figure with that shown by Cotterell in *National Types of Old Pewter*, p. 34, fig. 184 (at left). This English example dates between c. 1690-1720. The figures at the right in Cotterell's illustration show almost identical handles but looking carefully one notes a narrow median notch in the lower outline of the aperture next to the bowl. This notch is present in specimens made by the Danforths and Boardmans (fig. 9). The types with three openings on the median line may be described as "Typical Old English".

Another common variety of handle is that in which there is no opening on the median line next to the bowl. This seems to have been made in Holland as well as England as early as the 17th century. Cotterell and Vetter figured a Dutch example in *Antiques* for June, 1931, p. 458, fig. 305 (at left). Laughlin has illustrated specimens made by Frederick Bassett. Our fig. 10 shows an unmarked one. Such handles, with only two openings on the median line, may be called the "Plain Old English".

A sub-type of this, which because of its probable place of origin I am naming the "New York", has four instead of two apertures close to the bowl. I am not sure, but I think Henry Will was the designer. It is distinctive and, for an "Old English" porringer, even distinguished (fig. 5). It seems to be a good, solid German interpretation of an English motif. The austere lines of the English maiden are, so to speak, combined with those of the buxom hausfrau, rounding out the old formal contour. Perhaps it symbolizes the uniting of the old Dutch and English elements in New York. Mr. Nichols has a specimen by Frederick Bassett but it is less satisfactory because its upper surface seems to have been planed off till the grooves reaching the inner pair of apertures near the basin are almost obliterated. It bears the F B touch with two dots in place of the usual fleur-de-lis (Laughlin, pl. LIX, fig. 468). Samuel Danforth also made this sort of handle (fig. 6), but his are less satisfactory than Henry Will's for the reason that the inner of the openings near the bowl are not connected by grooves with apertures no. 2.

Henry Wills was not the only pewterer to modify the "Old English" handle. In Providence, Samuel and Samuel E. Hamlin used the flowered handle for their beer-pint porringers but had other molds for smaller ones (fig. 7). Obviously a man of taste, Samuel devised a small handle which harmonized well with the large one. Many collectors probably have mistaken this handle for a smaller edition of the flowered style. But it shows its true ancestry in the narrow inverted heart below the circular apical aperture. Samuel Hamlin deliberately did what many careless pewterers did accidentally; he joined the ends where prongs jutted out above the main and upper apertures of the "Old English" and so produced a handle with five sets of paired apertures instead of three. He left the original median opening below the shield, another indication of the origin of the design.

To economize on space and facilitate identification of unmarked specimens, the writer has prepared a key which is here submitted.

## *The Annual Meeting*

The P.C.C.A. held its annual meeting in the Brooklyn Museum on the afternoon of May 2nd. The attendance was on the thin side, undoubtedly due to the fact that the meeting was held within a few weeks of the anniversary meeting in Williamsburg which inevitably forced it into an anticlimatic relationship.

The principal business of the meeting concerned the election of officers. The following officers were elected: John P. Remensnyder as President; Mrs. Philip Huntington as 1st Vice-President; Mr. John H. McMurray as 2nd Vice-President; Mr. J. Kevin Ott as Secretary; Mr. Willard O. Brewer as Treasurer and Mr. Lennox F. Beach as Clerk. Mr. Eric deJonge succeeded Mrs. Huntington as Chairman of the Membership Committee and the proposed slate of officers first presented Mrs. Thomas D. Williams as 1st Vice-President and Mrs. Huntington as the new member of the rotating Board of Governors. When it became apparent that this step would place all three Governors in the same small geographical area, Mrs. Williams gracefully insisted that she and Mrs. Hunt-

ington exchange offices. For a moment or so the meeting assumed the aspect of a game of musical chairs, although with a chair for every player, and the outcome was quickly ratified with Mrs. Huntington becoming 1st Vice-President and Mrs. Williams joining Mr. Stanley Paddock and Dr. Robert Mallory III on the Board of Governors.

Mr. Eric deJonge gave an informal talk in which he elaborated upon his significant discovery of Brunstrom among the Moravians in Bethlehem, using photographic slides to illustrate his talk. Before the meeting was adjourned a plea was made for the return of books, club property, which are out on loan to various members.

## *The Regional Groups*

The New York and New England Regional Groups have held meetings, detailed accounts of which will appear in another issue. The New England group has a meeting tentatively scheduled for October 31st in Providence, R. I., and the yearly program of the New York group calls for a meeting in November which, if precedent is followed, will be held in New York City.

Membership in these Regional Groups is open to all members of the P.C.A.A. Dues are nominal. These Regional Groups promote the aims and purposes of the national organization through the medium of fraternization at the district level.

Any member of the P.C.A.A. who wishes to join one or another of the Regional Groups is invited to apply to the treasurer of the particular group. The names and addresses of the group treasurers are listed on this page.

## *New England Regional Group*

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# *The Love Enigma*

Eric deJonge, by far our most effective and indefatigable researcher, has been long engaged in an effort to track down the origin of the "lovebird" touch. He disclosed recent findings in an address during the Williamsburg anniversary meeting and, a few weeks later, at the annual meeting in the Brooklyn Museum. Mr. deJonge wisely refrained from attempting to pin the small tail of established fact upon the huge donkey of imagination and, in fact, gave me the impression that he felt these disclosures to be somewhat premature in view of the byways of research which must still be explored for their possible yield of additional fact. The facts are as follows:

1. The dramatic appearance of a straight-sided tankard, with "coin-top" lid, bearing in the well a finely-executed I. BRUNSTROM name touch (unrecorded and even undreamed of) plus, as secondary marks, three identical "hallmarks" consisting of a rampant lion facing left in a diamond-shaped outline, and a crowned X which, although somewhat detrited, appears to be identical with the crowned X found on a fair quantity of Love pewter. The lion-in-diamond "hallmarks", four times repeated, are also found in conjunction with the crowned X on the side of a tulip-shaped tankard bearing the "lovebird" touch in the well. Both tankards, the former belonging to the Wachovia Museum in Old Salem (Winston-Salem), N. C. and the latter belonging to Dr. and Mrs. Robert Mallory III, were on display and examined at the forum session of the Williamsburg anniversary meeting.

2. The discovery of an inventory of Brunstrom's estate which lists working tools and molds far beyond, in number and variety, those which one would expect to find in the possession of the pewterer whose image the name of Brunstrom formerly brought to mind. (Although no details are given and I am unable to verify it, I accept this inventory report as an established fact — it has been in existence for at least three years and every reference to it which has reached my ears has been conveyed in a conspiratorial manner without revealing names or locations. If military secrets were as well kept as this one we should fear no enemy.)

3. Although lacking the dramatic overtones of the previously-stated facts, the discovery by Mr. deJonge of a connection between Brunstrom and the United Brethren (Moravian) of Bethlehem, Pa., may well outweigh them in significance. This connection was found in the journal kept by a Swedish pastor who recorded an interview with Brunstrom while visiting the Moravian settlement in Bethlehem. (This interview, to Brunstrom's great delight, was carried on in the Swedish language — what extraordinary success Eric deJonge seems to have with Swedes!)

These several discoveries certainly provide ample conversational fodder for the fraternity of the hot stove but to deduce from them anything approaching a non-debatable hypothesis would still seem to depend more upon clairvoyance than logic. John J. Evans, making understandable use of poetic license, has declared in his article in the August issue of *Antiques* that Brunstrom is now "unmasked". The mask has certainly slipped a bit but the features of the man are hardly in plain sight yet. Some are beginning to refer indiscriminately to Love-marked pewter as the product of Brunstrom but there seems to be absolutely no justification at present for so sweeping a conclusion. In the light produced by these new discoveries several prominent features of the landscape stand out more clearly but the shadows seem, if anything, to be deeper.

Several of the most astute members of the P.C.C.A. have theorized in the past about the Love-marked pewter (Ledlie Laughlin in the BULLETIN, June 1946; Melville T. Nichols in *Antiques*, June 1947; John F. Ruckman in *Antiques*, May 1954) and it is both interesting and essential to examine these conjectures in the light of the latest discoveries and, most assuredly, vice versa.

Mr. Laughlin offered speculative dates of 1780-1830 as encompassing the period during which the Love-marked pewter was produced, basing his conjecture upon the exceptionally wide range of styles — note, however, that although many forms appear they

are confined, except for an occasional oddity, to a rather sharply limited range of categories (compare with William Will, for example) and that late forms are conspicuous by virtue of their absence from the list. These dates, especially the terminal date, I feel are more eloquently supported by the huge quantity of pewter produced, with its heavy emphasis upon plates, dishes and basins and — most particularly — by the truly splendid condition in which so much of this pewter is found. Quite apart from stylistic considerations, if one were to see a random assortment of 18th century American pewter in one pile and a random assortment of 19th century American pewter in another pile, it would require but little more than a single second to differentiate between them on the basis of condition alone simply because pewter saw less and less service as it became more and more outmoded. It is almost, if not quite, as difficult to find in truly beautiful condition a piece by, let us say, John Skinner or Thomas Danforth II as it is to find in deplorable condition a piece by the Boardman brothers — and the condition of much of the Love-marked pewter reminds one quite strongly of the condition of much Boardman pewter which was, of course, entirely a 19th century product. On this basis I find it easy to speculate that a very large portion of the Love-marked pewter was produced in the latter half of Mr. Laughlin's conjectured period and, in consequence, saw but limited use.

Mr. Nichols surmised that the name "Love" was chosen to represent symbolically the City of Brotherly Love (Philadelphia) and was chosen because this pewter was fashioned in the Philadelphia area. One cannot disagree with Mr. Nichols in his contention that the name "Love" has a particular significance — the word itself is so fraught with meaning that it cannot conceivably have been selected by the eeny-meeny-miney-mo method. It is quite possible, however, to speculate that the symbol, which it assuredly must be, refers to a doctrine rather than to a city and precisely at this point the discovery of Brunstrom in the Moravian settlement of Bethlehem is the catalyst which produces a generous precipitation of new theory.

Mr. Ruckman points out evidence of Swedish influence found in some of the Love-marked product and suggests that the so-called Hasselberg group (of which Brunstrom is a member) was in some way associated with the Love enterprise. The new findings give us no cause to do other than pin additional medals upon Mr. Ruckman's already well-decorated jacket.

I see nothing that weakens the theory that the Love-marked pewter was the product of a syndicate, one which most likely existed for more than a single generation of pewterers. It is strongly probable that Brunstrom was a member of this syndicate; likely also that the other members of the Hasselberg group participated and possible that still other members were pewterers who are well-known to us by their own names and product. In view of the fact that Brunstrom died in 1793 and had, at best, a comparatively short working period it's all but impossible to attribute the vast quantity of Love-marked pewter to him alone.

Even the assumption, for the sake of the argument, that almost all of Brunstrom's pewter is to be found in the large body of Love-marked pewterware, forces upon us the necessity of inventing explanations to account for evidence which appears to be contradictory. How shall we, for example, account for the very fine I. BRUNSTROM name touch which appears on the Wachovia Museum tankard and nowhere else? Furthermore, the crude IAB touch, which has long been accepted as that of Brunstrom, becomes almost as embarrassing as a fifth ace in a poker game. This touch, crude as it is, was the touch of a very good workman and the probabilities still seem to favor strongly its being an authentic Brunstrom touch.

A fascinating theory to which almost every known fact can be readily adjusted is one which supposes that the Love-marked pewter was all produced under the aegis of the United Brethren of the Moravian Church. Anyone who will take the trouble to open a reliable encyclopedia to the subject of the Moravian Church and related subtopics, including the history of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, will realize what a tremendous hold the Moravian beliefs had upon members of

the denomination and what remarkable achievements transpired under Moravian sponsorship and guidance. Here was no narrowly-exclusive or dogma-ridden sect but a group which was and is dedicated to vitalizing the fundamental principles of outlook and conduct which are a part of all true Christian belief — as I studied and became deeply interested in this subject I could not avoid the thought that it resembled in many ways, not the least of which is the universality of its appeal, the present day Moral Rearmament movement (known also as Buchmanism and the Oxford Movement).

In every product which can be identified clearly as a product of Moravian group-activity there seems to be an inspired excellence. This excelsior principle, as it might be termed, may be observed in the arts and crafts as well as in the field of education, both theological and secular. Examples of this pursuit of excellence for its own sake are as numerous as they are astounding. Their magnificent church music, to offer a single example, aroused the admiration — so long ago — of Benjamin Franklin. Later the first performances in America of the great choral works of Bach were produced by the Moravians in Bethlehem and, still later, evolved into the famous Bach Festivals which caused Bethlehem to be termed the Bayreuth of America and which attracted pilgrims from every corner of the continent and from reaches beyond. Buildings still stand in Bethlehem which were built by the Moravians in their earliest Bethlehem days and which housed their schools and workshops.

One is truly tempted to "go overboard" for the theory that the fashioning of pewterware — the finest, naturally — was one of the trades engaged in by the Moravian group and that this trade was carried on for a long period by men who remained anonymous as individuals but who were collectively known by the name "Love" which represented the cornerstone of Moravian faith.

Again, however, there is a disconcerting fact which has to be explained away before this theory can be accepted whole-heartedly. A large quantity of the Love-marked pewter bears a LONDON label as, we all know, does some of the pewter of several American makers. Kind-hearted commentators have declared that this is probably a "quality mark" to indicate quality comparable to that of London pewter which has always been the standard of excellence. Being a bit harder of heart, I am of the opinion that this label was deliberately used as a selling device in order to persuade customers that they were purchasing an authentic imported product — and the act of hiding behind a pseudonym such as "Semper Eadem" has very little weakening effect upon this opinion. The use of a LONDON label by an American workman would certainly arouse the interest and antagonism of Better Business Bureaus today. The happiest and most generous interpretation of this practice would still be forced to admit that the buyer of goods so marked would be permitted to deceive himself. The question is, therefore, how to reconcile the use of the LONDON label with the uncompromising adherence to every precept of morality which was a fundamental article of Moravian faith. I don't know — I wish I did.

W. D.

## *Our 25th Anniversary*

The P.C.C.A. recognized the twenty-fifth anniversary of its founding in festive manner at Williamsburg, Virginia, on the 13th and 14th of last March. Members attending this celebration had made plans to do so months in advance and a group of but slightly fewer than fifty were present. How pleasant it was to see familiar faces in a new setting and to greet, as well, some of our members seen only infrequently because of the barrier of distance which prevents their attendance on occasions of lesser significance. If a medal were to be given to the member traveling farthest for this meeting it would undoubtedly go to Mrs. Earl Lipscomb of Dallas, Texas, who could add it to that other medal which she deserves for guaranteeing, by her presence, that there will be no dull moments.

To a group of distinguished authorities and collectors added distinction was given by the presence of Mr. and Mrs. W. Gill Wylie, Jr., of rather far-off Palm Beach. A number of us know the Wylies through their continual and comprehensive research in the field of pewter measures but, Florida being located where it is, few of us have been priv-

ileged to meet them in person or to see their wonderful collection.

Club members gathered together for the first time on Friday evening in the East Lounge of the Williamsburg Inn where they were the guests of Colonial Williamsburg during a sumptuous reception. Hosts on this occasion were President and Mrs. Carlisle H. Humelsine and Curator John M. Graham II. This most enjoyable affair was in the nature of a family reunion.

On Saturday morning we were given by Mr. Graham a "behind the scenes" tour of the Curator's Warehouse. Here is housed the vast collection of pewter (and objects in other categories) acquired through the years and from which the public buildings of Colonial Williamsburg are supplied with an ever-changing decorative panorama. From time to time Mr. Graham gave little impromptu lectures to the entire group on various items and when he was not so engaged he placed himself at the beck and call of individuals for sideline discussions. He also volunteered to lead a group, after luncheon, on an unprogrammed tour of the public buildings for further discussion of the pewter on display there.

On Saturday afternoon a tea in the Williamsburg Lodge was followed by a forum at which were examined and discussed various pewter items brought to the meeting by club members and at which Eric deJonge gave an address on the interrelated subjects of the Love-marked pewter, Brunstrom and the Hasselberg group of pewterers. The deJonge talk is the subject of another article in this issue of the Bulletin.

A banquet on Saturday evening followed, its closing phase punctuated by a short business meeting called to order for several purposes one of which was the reading of greetings and congratulatory messages from absentees and, particularly, from our fellow-organization, the Society of Pewter Collectors of England. It was noted at this business meeting that a vast amount of research in England has more than doubled the amount of information contained in Cotterell's *Old Pewter* and an effort was made to find ways in which the P.C.C.A. might aid in putting this additional knowledge into permanent and readily-accessible form. This is surely a worthwhile project and one hopes that this line of endeavor will be carried further.

The meeting was brought to a close, later in the evening, with an illustrated lecture given by John J. Evans who used the text and slides prepared by Dr. Robert Mallory III for the 1958 Williamsburg Antiques Forum.

Credit is due in a number of directions for the success of this entire meeting but there can be no possible objection to singling out Mr. Graham for the "Oscar". His devotion, tirelessly and with rare cordiality, to the host's every function was remarkable in the extreme. He proved on this occasion that there does actually exist an indispensable man.

## *Pewter Measures*

One's knowledge of pewter forms is sadly deficient if it does not include the ability to recognize and classify, at least roughly, the many and varied forms designed for use as measuring vessels. The field is truly a vast one for it has existed since the beginning of time (as time is recorded in the chronology of pewter) and is highly diversified through national and regional influences and the tides of taste. Almost any pewter measure is an intrinsically attractive object and one which stimulates the imagination. Some forms are ubiquitous, although none the less attractive in consequence, while some forms are so ultra-rare as to be found about as frequently as Mt. Everest is ascended; and even the most commonplace forms may have, somewhere in the range of sizes, a capacity or two which is anything but easy to locate. Any collection, even one of rigidly limited scope, will be the better if it contains a set or two of measures or a few well-chosen individual measures, and the field is so extensive as to provide a dedicated collector with a lifetime of exciting sport entirely within its own domain.

As the field itself is vast, so is the ignorance concerning it — at least in this country — and so also is the amount of misinformation dispensed cheerfully and gratuitously by the semi-ignorant. Reasons for this state of affairs are not hard to find. In the first place, although measuring vessels were widely used

in colonial days and were, indeed, advertised and most probably made by many American pewterers of that period, they are all but non-existent today as American forms and, on those rare occasions when they are found at all, are found in but a single form. We are consequently victimized by our pre-occupation with American forms (or by our insular myopia, if one must call a spade something worse than a spade). Then again, until the fairly recent past it has been almost impossible to acquire much knowledge concerning pewter measures other than through the tedious method of plucking an occasional nugget of information from this or that book and then correlating this information into one's own personal memory file.

It is easier to find reasons for widespread ignorance on the subject of pewter measures than it is to find excuses for it. Excuses became invalid a few years ago upon the publication of a splendid handbook on this subject by W. Gill Wylie, Jr., a long time member of the Pewter Collectors' Club of America. This booklet bears the inspired title of *Pewter, Measure for Measure* and classifies fifty-two types of measures which have been produced in the British Isles, France and, of course, America. Mr. Wylie has pursued this subject for decades, both at home and abroad, and has amassed an encyclopedic knowledge of it. It almost goes without saying that he has also assembled a stunning and fabulous collection of measures which is, without question, second to none in existence whether in private hands or in those of a museum. His book is illustrated as completely as possible with photographs from his collection.

*Pewter, Measure for Measure* has become a widely-used book of reference on the subject of pewter measures. It is useful in an infinite number of ways, one of its primary and most useful functions being the transplanting of terminology from esoteric soil to the soil of common understanding. The words "double volute" need no longer require an involute description. It is no longer necessary for one to be baffled by the almost omnipresent misuse of the word "baluster" as applied to measures. The two terms just used within quotation marks happen to be random choices from among many dozens but they recall quite vividly my amazement when I visited a few years ago a small antique shop in New Hampshire. The shop was operated by two sisters who brought out a piece of pewter for my inspection. It happened to be a rather fine gallon-sized "double volute" baluster measure which had, apparently, seen service as a communion flagon in a nearby church. The sisters had purchased the piece and were regretting their purchase because, as one of them apologetically and ruefully explained, "We thought it might be a tappit hen". I will also add, since it bears upon my theme, that I once saw in a Williamsburg, Virginia, shop a French cylindrical measure — I think it was of demi-litre size — from which the lid had been forcibly removed (torn off, I mean) and which was sadly beaten in appearance. A sticker label proclaimed this to be a French piece of the 17th century and, if appearance were to be used as the guiding factor in determining the age of this vessel, it could easily have come out of the 12th century. This piece was probably a great rarity since, being of metrical capacity, it anticipated by a full century and a half the legal adoption of the metric system in France — but I passed it by, for I was unable to determine to my own satisfaction whether or not it was of the *early* 17th century (these distinctions are sometimes of great importance).

Although Mr. Wylie's book is indispensable — quite literally so — it is astonishing to note that comparatively few of us possess copies. It would not surprise me to learn that this book, which is well-known in England, has a wider circulation there than in this country (on a per capita basis). *Pewter, Measure for Measure* has received a good deal of word-of-mouth publicity but has never received its just due in these columns for it first appeared at about the time the BULLETIN lost its navigator and helmsman, Dr. Percy Raymond. The Wylie book became lost to sight in the hiatus which followed the death of Dr. Raymond. This article, it is hoped, will rectify that oversight.

It is more than possible that many people assume this book to be now out of print, as is almost every other book on the subject of pewter, and procurable only through the agency of a specialist in the tracing of such books or by stumbling upon it accidentally

in a second-hand bookseller's establishment. I am thinking at this moment of a good friend in the Boston area, a fairly recent and much more than fairly decent addition to our ranks, who procured her copy of *Pewter, Measure for Measure* in just this roundabout way after six months of effort. I am sure that it will be news to many that the book is readily procurable. Various dealers stock limited quantities from time to time — it is, as a matter of fact, listed by one dealer in the advertising pages of the October issue of *Antiques*, just arrived. It may also be had directly from the author at the standard retail price of $3.85. Address W. Gill Wylie, Jr., at 153 Woodbridge Road, Palm Beach, Florida.

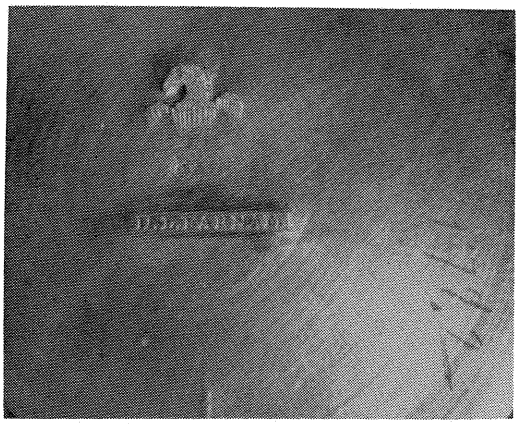
W. D.

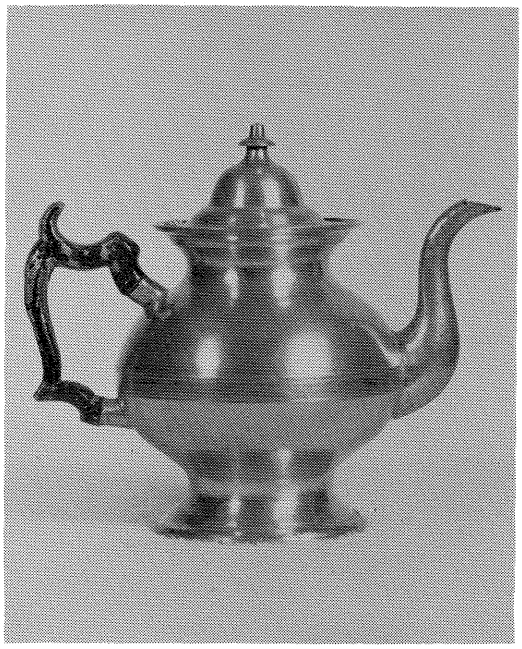
## *New Maker*

The Britannia teapot shown in the accompanying illustration is a singularly uninspired — and uninspiring — example of the pewterer's craft. Standing eight and one-half inches high, it is a typical late form produced by joining two identical half-molds; even this joining has been somewhat carelessly done, as evidenced by an untidy bead of solder remaining on the inside of the joint. But when one examines the touch which appears on the outside of the bottom of the pot, the justification for the present note appears: here is an eagle touch, accompanied by the name of a hitherto unreported maker. Regrettably, the lower part of the eagle is not clearly struck; enough can be seen, however, to identify a shield, divided into nine vertical stripes, on the breast of the bird. Details of the feathering are quite crude, as if the original die had been endowed with plumage by striking it repeatedly with a three-angled punch. Apparently the touch was struck in two steps, since the maker's name-touch is clear and distinct.

The teapot was sold as part of an estate from Northfield, Massachusetts. In it at the time of the sale was the typical note, identifying it as having been given as a wedding present in 1791! Also, someone has — apparently quite recently — scratched the date 1782 on the bottom of the pot.

Notwithstanding these evidences (!), it seems likely that the teapot was made somewhere about 1830 or later — a remarkably





late date at which to find an eagle touch in use. It is most tempting to assign some sort of relationship between this D. L. Farnam and the brothers, Rufus and Henry Farnam, who were silversmiths in Norwich, Boston and Hanover, N. H., from 1796 to 1840 or thereabouts. A rather casual preliminary search has uncovered no data in support of this theory.

The pot is at present in the collection of Dr. E. H. Whitaker of Oneonta, New York, who would appreciate receiving information concerning this maker, or other examples of his work.

E. H. W.

## *A Few Auction Notes*

Recently I had an opportunity to glance through a marked catalogue of one of the sales sessions, at Parke-Bernet in New York, at which was dispersed a portion of the extra-

ordinary collection of antiques belonging to the late Arthur J. Sussel of Philadelphia. Some pieces of pewter were listed and, as we are all more or less vitally interested in prices, I made a few notes for use in the BULLETIN.

The prize piece of the lot was a bedpan by William Will and this piece fetched a most astonishing and bewildering $1200. This about doubles the price I would have expected and indicates how firmly William Will is established as the "glamour boy" of American pewterers. One need not revalue the entire William Will product in the light of this figure, however, for it obviously represents a spirited contest among determined bidders for a piece which is not far removed from the category of the unique. Equally surprising to me was the figure of $90 which was realized on another bedpan, this bearing the TD & SB touch. This piece, which I happened to see, was in no better condition than fair to poor. I conjecture that a bedpan virus might have been at work on this occasion.

The Boardmans were also represented at this sale by a pair of tall beakers (normally tall, that is, and quite familiar) bearing the TB & Co. touch, a really scarce Boardman mark as it was used only during the very brief lifetime of Timothy Boardman. These beakers are intrinsically a very handsome form indeed and this pair was, I am told, in "almost mint" condition. Consequently the price of $150, fetched by the pair, seems to place them in the bargain area, especially in view of the bedpan figure of $90. The evaluation of any particular piece of pewter is a highly individual matter and I speak only for myself in saying that I would gladly have bid the realized price for this pair of beakers but would have stopped bidding on the bedpan long before the gavel fell.

A pair of whale oil lamps, 10″ tall and by Roswell Gleason, brought $90 each. These lamps were described, in the curious "gobbledegook" which one sometimes finds in auction catalogues, as being "on knopped vasiform standard crested with a pyriform font, semidome base" (a good ninety dollars worth of verbiage went with the lamps, it seems). From this description I am completely unable to picture the lamps but, fortunately, I saw the pair some five years ago in Arthur Sussel's shop in Philadelphia and found them exceptionally pleasing. They carried a price tag of $125 for the pair at that time and have, presumably, languished in the shop since that time with no takers. This type of lamp is known, incidentally, as "lemon top".

A so-called "lighthouse" coffee pot (or teapot) by Eben Smith brought $60 — rather high, although this style enjoys marked favor currently.

A very real rarity was a pint mug by Charles Plumly of Philadelphia. It was in fine condition, I hear, and the touch is the first recorded one by this pewterer working as an individual. In view of this and the additional fact that American mugs in general are gradually moving into the price range formerly occupied by American tankards, the figure of $400, at which the Plumly mug was sold, seems low, if anything.

One final word — H. Yale & Co. was listed in the catalogue as being an English firm. This is, of course, an error although hardly as spectacular an error as the one committed by the "antiques editor" of a magazine of the "beautify your home" type who advised a correspondent that the touch of TD & SB belonged to a family named Boardman who made silver plated articles exclusively and had headquarters in Birmingham, England. W.D.

## *Rhode Island Pewter*

Dr. Madelaine R. Brown and Mr. J. Kevin Ott, both possessors of magnificant collections of which Rhode Island pewter is the focal point, have combined forces in presenting an exhibition of Rhode Island pewter at the John Brown House of the Rhode Island Historical Society in Providence. It is on display from July 1st to October 30th. An illustrated catalog, handsomely and thoughtfully prepared, provides a listing of items as well as a considerable quantity of information. It is understood that the Rhode Island Historical Society has generously offered to supply each member of the P.C.C.A. with one of these catalogs which are and will remain highly valuable for reference purposes.

The catalog lists fifty-three items covering the entire range (1711-1856) of Rhode Island craftsmanship. Many of these items are

unique in form or feature, or bear unique touches or represent unique combinations of form and touch. Many another item is marked "rare" but escapes being unique only because of the existence of one or two identical pieces. This is a truly remarkable concentration of pewter treasure.

## *Pioneering Days*

Mr. Willard O. Brewer made the happy discovery, in an old pewter teapot, of some relatively ancient newspaper clippings of unusual interest to pewter collectors. These — brown with age, worn at the folds, brittle and somewhat fragile — he painstakingly mounted on strong paper backing and sent on to me as grist for the BULLETIN mill. These clippings comprise two feature articles on the subject of pewter and they appeared forty-two and fifty-five years ago, respectively, in the columns of the *Boston Sunday Herald.* It is not feasible to reprint them in their entirety since they are far too long in the first place and, in the second place, they contain rather too many anachronistic elements. We shall instead attempt to concoct an agreeable distillate out of them.

The earlier of the two articles appeared on February 14, 1904, an almost prehistoric date in the chronicles of the collector of pewter, and describes the collection of one Frank Jackson, formerly of England but then a resident of Boston. Mr. Jackson had spent some seventeen years in the building of his collection which, at the time of the article, numbered about five hundred pieces. It had been reduced, believe it or not, to this size several years earlier from its previous high water mark of some six hundred and fifty pieces. Mr. Jackson obviously began collecting pewter somewhere in the 1880's.

Frank Jackson is described as a well-known English artist. The article says that "his wide knowledge of art matters in general stood him in excellent stead when the ambition to possess a great collection of pewter seized him — it was the harmonious blending of the soft gray of pewter in connection with the decoration of his rooms that first aroused his interest in the alloy." Mr. Jackson seems to have come in through the same door which most of us have used. In other words, he apparently saw a piece or two of pewter and was instinctively drawn to it, not by its commercial value or its position in an index of rarity, but by its own innate and inimitable character and quality. He also recognized almost instantly the extraordinary accessory value and versatility of pewter, unsurpassed by that of any other metal or alloy, in the decorative scheme. If we can attribute our own initial interest in pewter, as we can Mr. Jackson's, to an unusual degree of perceptiveness in matters of art, so much the better for our self-esteem.

Once his collecting interest was aroused, according to the article, Mr. Jackson "indulged in no aimless plunges, no reckless extravagances." Someone has very obviously deceived this reporter for, if that statement were true, we should have to demote Mr. Jackson to the very lowest rank in the collecting phalanx. I cannot believe the statement to be true and I insert it here merely for its laugh-producing value.

Mr. Jackson began "in a fragmentary manner, picking up a plate here, a candlestick or dish there, a rare tankard in some country inn, until quite a nucleus had been gotten together, when, fortunately for him, his friend Walter Churcher, another London artist, was taken with the fever and the two became enthusiastic hunters, roaming all over England, studying the age, makers, marks, and compiling a running history of the old-time articles that fell under their notice." The work of such great scholars as Ledlie Laughlin and Howard Cotterell would, of course, have been quite impossible without a vast amount of just such preliminary digging and burrowing by earlier enthusiasts. The name of Walter Churcher (note, please, that he was also an artist, which fact was news to me) is a name very familiar to all well-informed pewter collectors. He is referred to many times in the volumes written about English pewter. I have never come across the name of Frank Jackson, however, and can only speculate that his residence in this country or, possibly, an early demise may have brought about the dismissal into oblivion of both his name and his contribution to the fund of knowledge.

Quite early in his collecting career Mr. Jackson bent his energies toward putting to-

gether a complete dinner service which would accommodate at least six persons. When this ambition was finally realized he inaugurated a series of pewter dinners which became quite celebrated in the circles in which he moved. The revival of these functions in his Boston home was, apparently, the blossom which produced this newspaper article as its fruit.

This was, of course, long after Mr. Jackson had acquired what we would call in these days his "starter set" — the pewter dinner service for six — and he now had three distinct sets of service, each accommodating twelve, with a goodly number of odd pieces to spare. One of these dinner sets is referred to as the "Old Staple Inn dinner service" each piece of which bears an authentic 1717 date. This very large set was discovered and acquired jointly by Mr. Jackson and Mr. Churcher each of whom held one-half in his possession with the whole to go to the survivor. Turning over the leaves of Cotterell's *Old Pewter*, I find a photograph of a plate from this service certified as being in the Churcher collection and, several pages earlier, another photograpted plate from the Churcher collection and a reference to Mr. Churcher's stock of plates which "apart from his collection, he keeps for his famous Pewter Suppers". Mr. Churcher very obviously kept alive the custom begun by his friend and fellow-collector Jackson.

Incidentally, this custom has much to recommend it. It is practised by a fair number of individuals in this country and by at least one eating place, I have heard, in Boston. It provides an atmosphere which turns an occasion into an event. Of course one runs the risk that a guest will impetuously turn over his plate to examine the touch before having cleared his food from it but this is counterbalanced by the undeniable fact that one's pewter is cleaned more frequently in this manner than in any other.

There are in this article descriptions and photographs of other pieces in the Jackson collection upon which brief comment may not be amiss. What is called the collection's "greatest single treasure" is a "Cromwellian cheese dish", neither Jackson nor Churcher "having ever seen or heard of its like or anything resembling it". The object is familiar enough to collectors today — it is a footed plate or tazza, sometimes incorrectly called a "paten". The latter term is correct, naturally, only if it can be shown authentically that the particular piece in question was actually part of a communion service. If this piece is of the Cromwellian period it is extremely early, naturally, and if, in addition, it was once the property of Oliver Cromwell, as claimed with a certain amount of justification, then it is really quite a "treasure" although the form itself hardly warrants being so-designated (we must bear in mind the fact that all this represents the viewpoint of 1904 or a decade earlier).

One more piece will be mentioned, a deep dish 15″ in diameter and 3½″ in depth. This is mentioned because it is called in the article (and presumably by Mr. Jackson) a "plate or porringer". Disregarding the misuse of the word plate to describe what is actually a dish, I am highly intrigued by this word "porringer" used in connection with a fifteen inch deep dish. I am still troubled in my mind over those exceptionally heavy "porringers" which, together with pewter dishes, were thrown frenziedly into the melt by Benvenuto Cellini when he was casting his Perseus. Can it be that the word porringer was once used, or was used in other lands, to describe both large and small vessels designed to hold liquid or semi-liquid contents? The antecedent French word *potage* allows for a very broad interpretation.

The article closes with the observation that Mr. Jackson is strongly in favor of the use of pewter as an inlay ornament in the designing of furniture. This strikingly suitable field of use has been greatly, although by no means entirely, neglected. Inlaid pewter or pewter itself used as an inlay material offers a highly-specialized but fascinating field for collectors.

Comment on the second of the two newspaper articles which constitute Mr. Brewer's "find" will be reserved for another issue of the BULLETIN. W. D.

## Classified Members' Notices

Anxious to enlarge and fill gaps in my pewter library. Desire information about any kind of literature or printed matter pertaining to pewter. English and foreign languages. Will buy if not in my library.

Eric de Jonge
1410 Wood Road
New York 62, N. Y.

Pewter: old English and Continental, bought and sold. Also French Faience and Delft. See my ad in this Bulletin.
Wanted: out of print books on pewter in English and foreign languages.

Harry Hirsch
213 East 55th Street
New York 22, N. Y.

Wanted: account books, receipt books, or any other primary documents relating to American pewterers or eighteenth century American craftsmen.

Dean A. Fales, Jr.
Winterthur, Delaware