

The
PEWTER COLLECTORS CLUB
of AMERICA INC.

• T H E B U L L E T I N •

WINTER 2002

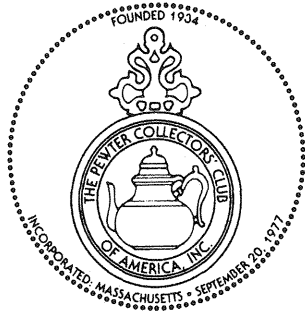
VOLUME 12, NUMBER 8

A Simon Edgell Tankard

*See Article on Simon Edgell by Jay Robert Stiefel
On Page 353*



Quart Tankard with double-domed lid, H $6\frac{9}{16}$ ", TD $4\frac{3}{8}$ ", BD $4\frac{3}{4}$ ", mark L526 on inside bottom. *Photo Courtesy Winterthur Museum (#65.553).* Body engraved with floral decoration and initials, "A M." Laughlin described it as, "Perhaps earliest of all surviving American Tankards."



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President's Letter

The highlight of our recent Board Meeting was the elevation of Wendell Hilt and Webster Goodwin to the positions of Honorary Membership. This is the highest honor our organization can bestow on a fellow member. Medals, plaques and trophies are not associated with this award. It is conveyed with just a few quiet words from the heart that simply say, "You are the Best of the Best." Your contributions to the knowledge of our organization are legendary. On behalf of our Board of Governors and the entire PCCA membership, we congratulate each of you and ask that you both accept this honor as a sincere token of our appreciation.

The rest of our Board Meeting was moving right along until Bill Snow, our Visual Communications Chairman, asked to be relieved of the tiresome task of updating the Membership Directory which is reprinted every two years. He asked if someone would like to volunteer? The mad scramble of Board Members diving under the table was startling. Our newest Board Member, Debra Brewitt, seemed a little shook-up by all the commotion so she raised her hand to ask a question. I immediately thanked her for volunteering and moved on to new business.

The only other thing of note that took place at the meeting was when Barbara Horan (The Whip), who has long been known for her unswerving dedication to drinking nothing but "Earl Grey Tea," announced that she had switched to "Chai Tea." This was met with stunned disbelief, and the event was duly noted in the Board minutes.

Dwayne Abbott, our Newsletter Editor and Librarian, advised that he had received an email from our sister organization in the UK regarding an email they received from an irate pewterer in the US. The writer complained that false pewter was being advertised for sale on the Internet. Since this was an international issue, I immediately had my computer print a copy of the advertisement. The sheet had the word, "Pewter" printed in large type, followed by illustrations of assorted little basins and then a paragraph detailing the metal composition that began: "These hand cast pewter pieces are composed mainly of Aluminum and small quantities of copper and silicon."

My first impulse was to write a letter of complaint, but the factory is located in Mexico, and my knowledge of Spanish leaves much to be desired. I do know a few phrases that can usually get me around in mixed company, like "Buenos Dias" or "Hasta la vista, Baby!" but I didn't think that this limited vocabulary was sufficient enough to write the sort of letter I had in mind. I had to temporarily set the matter aside.

Switching to a more serious note, since this is my final letter as President, I want to thank all of my fellow officers as well as all of the Board members for having made my job as easy as possible. Special mention should be made of Richard Graver, our First Vice President, for his outstanding job of planning the national meetings for the past two years; for Garland Pass, our Bulletin editor, and Dwayne Abbott, our Newsletter Editor, for continuing to publish issues that are informative and entertaining; and for our Treasurer, Terry Ashley, and our Secretary, Bob Horan, whose quiet and behind the scenes talents have kept our Club running effectively.

Sherwin Herzog

Two New Honorary Members

The Board of Governors at its meeting on October 11, 2002 unanimously bestowed honorary membership on two of our long-standing members:

Webster Goodwin (1969)

In honoring Webster Goodwin, the PCCA acknowledges the long-standing support given it by one of its oldest living members (age 94) – and one who continues to be an avid pewter collector and exemplary supporter of the PCCA. Webster's contributions to furthering scholarship and inculcating interest in pewter collecting are long standing. His tireless efforts as editor of its *Bulletin* from 1977-1986 are evident by the remarkable series of informative articles and pictorial catalogues therein; his evolving collection has always remained available to pewter collectors as a treasure-trove of useful information. Web's eminent American collection includes several first-rank American forms from several regions, as well as depth by locality (Rhode Island) and form (porringers). He's universal in his collecting tastes, though, and his collection is graced by several important English and continental pieces, too. Of utmost benefit to scholars, Web has freely allowed researchers access to his remarkable collection for research purposes. Numerous articles by Web himself, as well as others by William Blaney and Richard Bowen, Jr. in the PCCA *Bulletin* have been based on items from Web's collection. He has freely loaned items to illustrate various PCCA meetings – both national and regional. The Webster Goodwin Collection of Newport pewter, now housed and publically displayed in one of that town's historic houses, will remain a lasting testimony to his collecting prowess and willingness to share with others. A presentation at the most recent PCCA meeting (October 2002) on northern Connecticut Valley pewterers (Southmayd, Pierce, and Lee) greatly benefited from the loan of 25 pieces from Webster's collection, including seven marked Richard Lee porringers illustrating the full range of "right" forms and marks.

Wendell Hilt (1957)

"No thanks are adequate for his invaluable assistance." Thus Ledlie Laughlin acknowledged his indebtedness to Wendell Hilt, 84. Wendell has worked tirelessly, usually behind the scenes, to further our collective understanding of the history of pewter and pewterers in his home state of Connecticut. His son recalls his Dad spending hours in the archives of the Connecticut Historical Society, researching Connecticut pewterers-maintaining detailed, well-documented records. Laughlin credited him thusly: "[among those] men to whom I am so indebted for information not published before is Wendell Hilt, who has gone through the records of Connecticut with a fine-tooth comb and uncovered enough new material about Connecticut pewterers and britannia makers to have published a volume on the subject. In fact, he had contemplated seriously that project but self-effacingly and most generously submitted all this material to me with each item meticulously catalogued as to its source." (Laughlin, *Pewter in America*, Vol. III, p. xii) Wendell was similarly acknowledged by John Carl Thomas at the outset of his Bicentennial publication, *Connecticut Pewter and Pewterers* (The Connecticut Historical Society, 1976): "To Wendell Hilt I owe a special debt of gratitude for his sharing with me the voluminous research he has done on the pewterers of Connecticut...His notes form the nucleus of this entire work." The extent of our club's debt to Wendell Hilt is unquantifiable; indeed, only he may know how large it truly is. Naming Wendell Hilt an Honorary Member only begins to offset the tremendous debt the PCCA owes to a highly creative and persistent scholar/researcher into the craft of pewter and britannia making and the lives of those who engaged in it in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Connecticut.

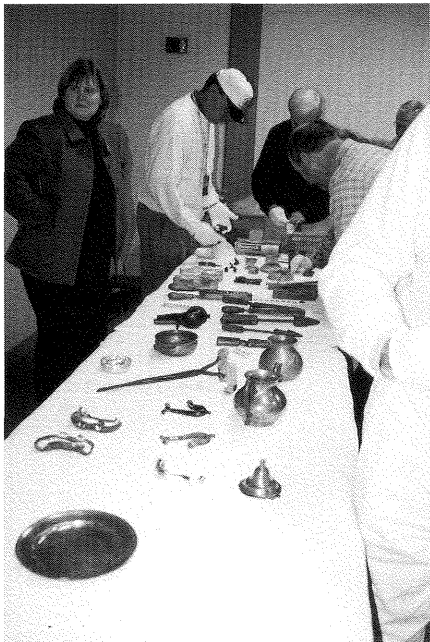
National Fall Meeting
Historic Deerfield, MA, October 11-13, 2002
(Photographs by Bill Snow)



Members arrive at the Flynt Center on Saturday morning to view the collections and begin the day's activities.



The highlight of the day was **Dick Graver's** talk and demonstration of the molds and other tools used by pewterers.



From left to right, **Amanda Lange**, Associate Curator of Historic Deerfield, **Roy Rodriguez**, **Bud Swain** and **Fred Rockwood** inspect the molds and tools, many originally belonging to the pewterer, Samuel Pierce.



On Saturday evening, **David Kilroy** gave an informative talk on, "Connecticut Valley Pewterers, Samuel Pierce and Richard Lee, Sr. & Jr."

Editor's Introduction

The cover article in this issue, on Simon Edgell the early Philadelphia pewterer, is by Jay Robert Stiefel. Mr. Stiefel is a practicing attorney in Philadelphia, specializing in complex litigation. In addition to his studies in law and international relations, he also majored in history at the University of Pennsylvania, as an undergraduate, and at Oxford University (Christ Church), as a graduate student. Mr. Stiefel continues to pursue his love of history through his deep involvement in many of the cultural and civic institutions of his city, and by speaking and writing on many subjects, including colonial American commerce, artisanal relationships, and Philadelphia's decorative arts. A frequent lecturer at Winterthur Museum, he will be giving talks this coming year on research resources in cultural institutions, and on connoisseurship and collecting, to its Fellows in the Program on Early American Culture; on documenting the decorative arts, at its Winter Institute; and on reinterpreting furniture history, at its Furniture Forum. Mr. Stiefel returns to Oxford University, in the autumn of 2003, to address the Regional Furniture Society, on Anglo-American colonial furniture makers.

Until he began the research for this article on Simon Edgell, Mr. Stiefel had only a passing knowledge of antique pewter. Since he is not a member of the PCCA, it may be of interest to learn how he was invited to submit an article to *The Bulletin*. About a year ago, David Kilroy, our second vice president, was conducting a search on the Internet for any information on the pewterer, Simon Edgell. He came across two articles written by Mr. Stiefel for the American Philosophical Society's online historical journal, the *Library Bulletin*, vol. 1, no. 1, new series [<http://www.amphilsoc.org/library/bulletin/20011/head.htm>]. The articles describe Mr. Stiefel's discovery of an account book of a previously unrecognized Philadelphia joiner, John Head, and his dealings with several Philadelphia craftsmen, including Simon Edgell. David brought the articles to my attention. I read them and was impressed with Mr. Stiefel's writing and his discovery of new information on Edgell that I felt should be brought to the attention of the PCCA. I contacted Mr. Stiefel and invited him to modify and expand the portion of his articles related to Edgell and submit it for publication in *The Bulletin*. Mr. Stiefel graciously accepted the invitation.

In order to augment the information on Edgell that he had found in the Head account book, and in the meager references in Laughlin and Montgomery, Mr. Stiefel applied his research capabilities to surviving primary sources on both sides of the Atlantic. His inquiries into Edgell's background and apprenticeship in England prior to his migration to America were advanced by information and suggestions provided by members of The Pewter Society and the Pewterers Company. It soon became evident that there was a considerable amount of material on Edgell that had never been published. With encouragement from me and others, Mr. Stiefel expanded his article beyond its original scope and, in so doing, has given us a new look at Simon Edgell and his life in colonial Philadelphia. The end-result is one of the longest articles ever published in *The Bulletin*. Actually, the text is only 23 pages long, however his endnotes, which are as interesting to read as his text, add another 13 pages. I believe it is one of the finest articles on an early American pewterer ever published in *The Bulletin*.

Garland Pass

Simon Edgell (1687-1742) – “To A Puter Dish” And Grander Transactions Of A London-trained Pewterer in Philadelphia

Jay Robert Stiefel

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I. Introduction: Little Previously Known Of Edgell

Were it not for the quality of the small amount of pewter that survives with his marks, Simon Edgell's role in the history of American pewter would doubtless have been relegated to obscurity.¹ With little documentary record previously known, and no ledger or letter book extant, Edgell had become one of many “historically inarticulate” Philadelphia artisans - those whom traditional histories had overlooked.² By reinterpreting old sources and introducing new ones, this article will attempt to provide a fuller and more accurate understanding of Simon Edgell's career - in short, to restore resonance to his “voice.”³

The late Charles Montgomery bemoaned the general lack of contemporaneous transactional information for 18th century and earlier American pewterers.⁴ How Simon Edgell conducted his trade was among the specific questions to which Montgomery sought answers:

Did Philadelphia's most important early pewterer, Simon Edgell...supply traders and storekeepers with his wares for resale?... Account books would throw new light on these transactions. Discovery of such pewterers' records would be a great find! I hope one of my readers will be so lucky as to uncover such a group of manuscripts and be kind enough to bring them to my attention.⁵

In the absence of such documentation, there has been much confusion as to what extent Edgell made or imported pewter. Montgomery, who must have been unaware of connections which Edgell, his business associates, and creditors had to the importation and distribution of pewter from England, ascribed to Edgell's hand any pewter listed in his probate inventory.⁶

By contrast, another expert went too far in the opposite direction. Kerfoot demoted Edgell to no more than a “reputed” American pewterer. He considered Edgell, and certain other of his contemporaries, as “pewterers” only in name, wholly subservient to the power of the Pewterers Company in London, and lacking the funds necessary to acquire “the valuable outfit of expensive gun-metal moulds needed for the full practice of that craft.”⁷

Of all prior writers, Laughlin has left us the greatest amount of detail regarding Edgell's life and work.⁸ But even he, for want of a broader record, fell prey to assumptions, which can no longer be supported.

Set forth in the following pages is what information I have found and my interpretation of it. May future researchers correct my mistakes and misconceptions, and bring them to my attention.

II. Edgell Learns His Trade In England

A. A Somerset Youth's Presentment To The Pewterers Company

The first documented evidence of Simon Edgell being in the pewter trade appears, under date of "18 June 1702," in the records of the Pewterers Company of London:

William Hux presents Simon Edgell Sonn of Simon Edgell of Camley in the County of Somerset Yeom[an] for Seven years from the twenty Fourth Instant.⁹

Two shillings, six pence was paid for Edgell's presentment as an apprentice.¹⁰

The records of the parish of Camely, reveal that a Simon Edgell, son of Rebeka Maggs and Simon Edgell "sometime clark of this Parish," was baptized on the 10th day of the 4th month 1687.¹¹ As no other Simon is baptized in Camely parish before 1729, and none of those to a father named Simon,¹² the Simon baptized in 1687 is undoubtedly our pewterer.¹³

B. William Hux, Master Of Simon Edgell, Apprentice

"WH 1700," the mark of Edgell's master, William Hux, bears a fleur-de-lis at its center.¹⁴ This suggests that Hux was of French origin or may have wanted people to think so. His father, Thomas, was actually a maltster from Shipton-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire. As commemorated in his mark, Hux himself had been free of the Company only since 1700.¹⁵

Thus, being bound just two years later, Edgell would not have had the benefit of a master of long experience.¹⁶ Nor, in Hux, did he have the advantage of association with someone of unimpeachable reputation.

On June 22, 1704, Hux was called before the Court of Assistants "for making watches of bad Mettle." Hux blamed the negligence of a "servant" for the case being 3 gr. from fine. In defense of the "Dyall Plate" being found 19 gr. worse than Lay, Hux responded that it "could not be made so well of any other Mettle."¹⁷ We do not know whether any of this directly involved Edgell, as the Court did not identify Hux's allegedly negligent servant.

Hux was again summoned before the Court, on March 24, 1714 - for a toy watchcase found 5 gr. worse than Lay. As was his habit, Hux attempted to shift the blame elsewhere. He defended "that one Beasley has made the same sort of ware of Lay and sometimes as Bad as pale and if he [i.e., Hux] be not suffered to work as another he shall loose his Trade."¹⁸

Given his master's predilection for blaming others for his own shoddy work, Edgell no doubt may have felt fortunate to at last be free of the Company – and of Hux – in 1709. It might only have been a matter of time before Hux made a scapegoat of Edgell, as well.¹⁹ Those wishing to judge the quality of Hux's cases for themselves may do so. A toy watch by "Hux London" survives in the clock and watch collection of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers.²⁰

C. Simon Edgell, Yeoman Of The Company

On "13 October 1709," after completing his apprenticeship with Hux, Edgell became a Yeoman of the Company:

admitted freemen who are entered in the freedom Book[:]. . . Simon Edgell apprentice to William Hux.²¹

His admission cost three shillings, four pence.²²

Presuming that Simon's birth closely preceded his baptism, Edgell was just past his 15th birthday when presented for apprenticeship, and well beyond his 22nd on becoming a Yeoman of the Company. He did not gain his freedom by patrimony.²³ While Simon's father is described as a "Somerset Yeom[an]," there is no record of his ever having been admitted to the Company himself. Simon the father was thus a yeoman in the more common sense, *i.e.*, a freeholder.²⁴

After Edgell's admission to the freedom of the Company, there is no further mention of him in its records. No notation appears that he ever registered a mark or opened a shop.²⁵ Whether Edgell stayed on in London, returned to Somerset, or immediately set sail for America is unknown. His name shows up nowhere for another four years. Then, just as suddenly, it pops up in Philadelphia.



Fig. 1
Beaker, H $4\frac{3}{8}$ "", TD $3\frac{1}{2}$ "", BD $3\frac{1}{4}$ "", mark L526 on inside bottom. *Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Donald M. Herr.*



Fig. 2 a

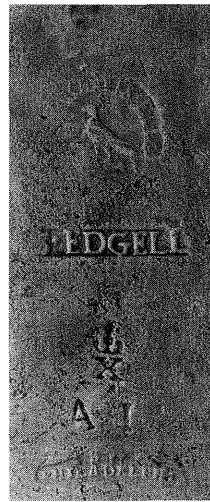


Fig. 2 b



Fig. 2 c

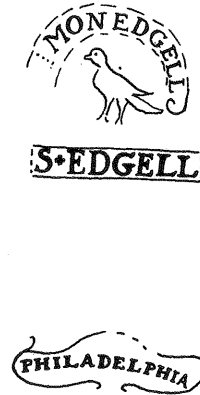


Fig. 2 d

(a) Photo of mark L526 on Beaker in Fig. 1. (b) Photo of marks L527, L528, and L529 as shown in Laughlin, *Pewter in America*, vol. II, Plate LXV. (c) Drawing of mark L526 as it appears in Carl Jacobs, *Guide to American Pewter*, p.88. (d) Drawings of marks L527, 528 and 529 as they appear in Jacobs, p.88.

III. Edgell Brings His Trade To Philadelphia

As noted by Donald L. Fennimore:

[L]ittle is known of [Edgell] during his twenty-nine years in Philadelphia....²⁶

Edgell's name appears nowhere in the *General Index to the Colonial Records and the Pennsylvania Archives*.²⁷

What follows is the most complete picture that I could draw, from extant documentation, of Edgell's life and work in Philadelphia. Most of such material has never before been cited.

A. The Earliest Records Of Edgell In Philadelphia

There has been much conjecture as to when Edgell first arrived in Philadelphia.²⁸ The general consensus is that he was in Philadelphia at least as early as 1713,²⁹ the date of the first surviving record of his presence. Edgell appears as a witness in an abstract of a December 13, 1713 certificate of a marriage between George Mifflin and Esther Cordery, before the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting.³⁰

Edgell's name next appears, on the January 29, 1717, in the Minutes of the Common Council:

Upon the Peticon of Simon Edgill, Setting fforth that there is a vacancy of the Office for Sealing Weights & Measures within this City, Craved that this Board Would please to appoint him to Execute ye s'd Office, wch s'd peticon is referred to ye next Council.³¹

There is no record as to whether Edgell's petition ever succeeded.

B. Edgell, As "Pewterer," Becomes A Freeman Of Philadelphia

While some have presumed that Edgell was *working* as a pewterer in Philadelphia from at least as early as 1713,³² the first express indication of what he might be doing is not until four years later. In the May 27, 1717 Minutes of the Common Council, Simon Edgell, a "pewterer," is listed as paying fifteen shillings, six pence, upon his admission as a freeman of that city.³³

C. Edgell In The Records Of The Society Of Friends

Mystery also surrounds Edgell's early connections to the Society of Friends. There is no record, on either side of the Atlantic, as to when he first became a Quaker, was accepted into the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, or was married.³⁴

The earliest mention in Quaker records of a personal event in Edgell's life is the death of his daughter, Hannah, in 1719. The next is that of the death of his son John, in 1724.³⁵ These are also the first occurrences of Edgell's name in the records of the Meeting after the Mifflin marriage. He does not come up again in the Meeting's records until the minutes of 1731.³⁶

IV. Edgell's Sets Up on High Street And Buys A Second, Larger Property Nearby

By the end of 1717, Edgell had sufficient means to acquire a house and lot from merchant Richard Hill. While not overly large, measuring 19 x 39 feet, the house stood in perhaps the prime retail location in the town, on the north side of High Street, several doors to the east of Delaware Second Street, near the entrance to the market stalls.³⁷

High (later Market) Street, at nearly one hundred feet wide, was twice the width of almost every other street in Philadelphia.³⁸ It was also the principal east-west thoroughfare, linking the two rivers bounding the city. Edgell's property lay only a couple of blocks to the west of Philadelphia's deepest river, the Delaware, where imported goods were being off-loaded daily from its wharves. The market stalls in front of Edgell's premises stretched westward up High Street, toward Philadelphia's other river, the Schuylkill. On market days, most of Philadelphia would have walked by his door.³⁹

In 1721, Edgell acquired another house and sizable lot on Walnut Street, from cordwainer Elisha Gatchell, paying a substantial ground rent of £10-6-3.⁴⁰ What Edgell did with this property is unknown. Walnut Street lay two blocks south of High Street, a less central commercial location. Edgell may have bought it for income or to live in. (Moving his residence to Walnut Street would have afforded him more space for business at his relatively cramped, but still more desirable, High Street premises.)

In June 1728, Edgell rented out the High Street house to the partnership of Benjamin Franklin and Hugh Meredith, at £24 per annum.⁴¹ Why Edgell gave up such a prime retail location at that time is unknown,⁴² but will be explored - after we first take a look at what pewter transactions he conducted while there.

V. The Record of Edgell's Pewter Transactions

The surviving record of Simon Edgell's pewter transactions spans only 1717-1730.⁴³ It is thus roughly contemporaneous with his initial use of the High Street retail location,⁴⁴ and prior to the advertisements of his move to the wharves - a point of no little significance, as will be soon discussed.

A. Edgell's Pewter Transactions In The Account Papers Of Logan, Hill, And Reynell

Edgell's earliest documented sales of pewter appear in the ledgers of James Logan (1674-1751). Edgell could have had no more powerful and prestigious a patron in Philadelphia at that time. Logan had been secretary to William Penn (1684-1718), Pennsylvania's founder. By the time he first recorded buying pewter from Edgell, Logan was one of Philadelphia's wealthiest merchants and, after Penn returned to England, its most prominent political figure.⁴⁵

On "1717 8 Mo 31," Logan credited Edgell eight shillings for "1 Pewter 9b Pott & 1 half pint ditto." Later that year, on "11 Mo 27," two transactions were recorded: six shillings for "1 pr Candlesticks," and £3-0-3 for "Dishes and Plates."⁴⁶ On "1724 11 Mo 11," another Logan ledger recorded a household debit of £2-2-9 "paid Simon Edgel for a Limbeck etc."⁴⁷ Logan, an intellectual and polymath, may have used the alembic for experiments.⁴⁸

On May 8, 1729, the Estate of Richard Hill, to whom Edgell was paying ground rent for the High Street property, recorded paying Edgell £1-14-0 in cash "for plates."⁴⁹ They are described more particularly as "12 plats" on a May 12, 1729 bill signed by Edgell for the same transaction: "Paid in full of ye above and in full of all Demands p[e]r Simon Edgell."⁵⁰ This is the only surviving bill from Edgell. It also contains the earliest exemplar of his signature, the 1713 Mifflin marriage certificate being known only in abstract.

It is unknown whether pewter was among the 15 shillings of unspecified freight that "Simon Edgill" entrusted to Thomas Chalkley, Master of the *New Bristol Hope*, on her second voyage, embarking from Philadelphia to Barbados on December 27, 1729.⁵¹ If this freight included pewter, it would be the only known instance of Edgell exporting it.⁵²

The latest extant pewter transaction recorded for Edgell appears in John Reynell's journal. Among the costs of construction for the ship *Delaware*, in 1730, is: "To Simon Edgill for Pewter... 1-1-0."⁵³

B. Edgell's Transactions In The Account Book Of John Head

The principal source of new documentation regarding Edgell's life and work in Philadelphia is the account book of a previously unrecognized Philadelphia joiner, John Head (1688-1754).⁵⁴ Born in Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, Head emigrated to Philadelphia in 1717. Over a 35-year span (1718-1753), Head's account book records approximately 5,000 transactions, in more than 600 accounts, including that of Simon Edgell. The transactions include not just furniture, but all sorts of bartered goods and services, pewter and pewter repair among them.⁵⁵

Head's entries for Edgell cover 1719-1732.⁵⁶ They provide details regarding not only Edgell's manufactures and his commercial relationships, but also of his personal life. The Edgell pewter entries span 1724-1726. Thus, as with Edgell's pewter transactions with Logan, Hill, and Reynell, the Head entries also do not date beyond Edgell's first period of occupancy of the High Street house.

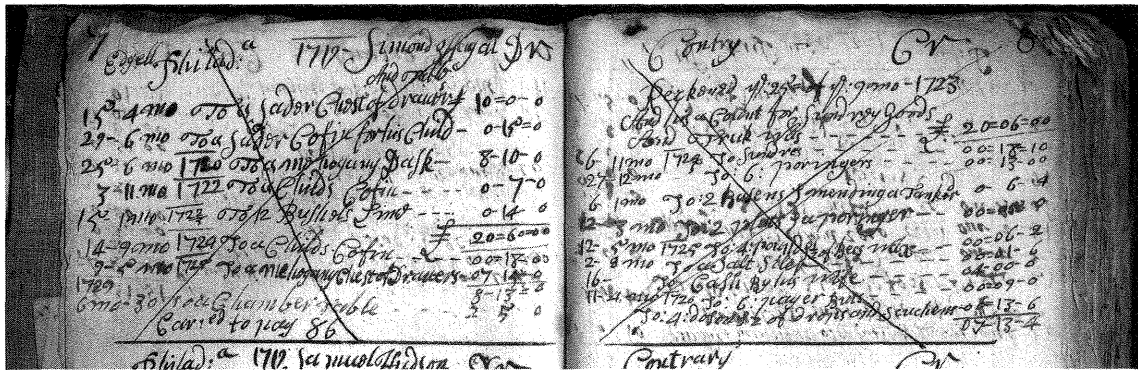


Fig. 3. Account of Simon Edgell, Transactions 1719-1729, John Head Account Book, pp. 7-8. George Vaux Papers, American Philosophical Society, Frank Margeson, photographer.

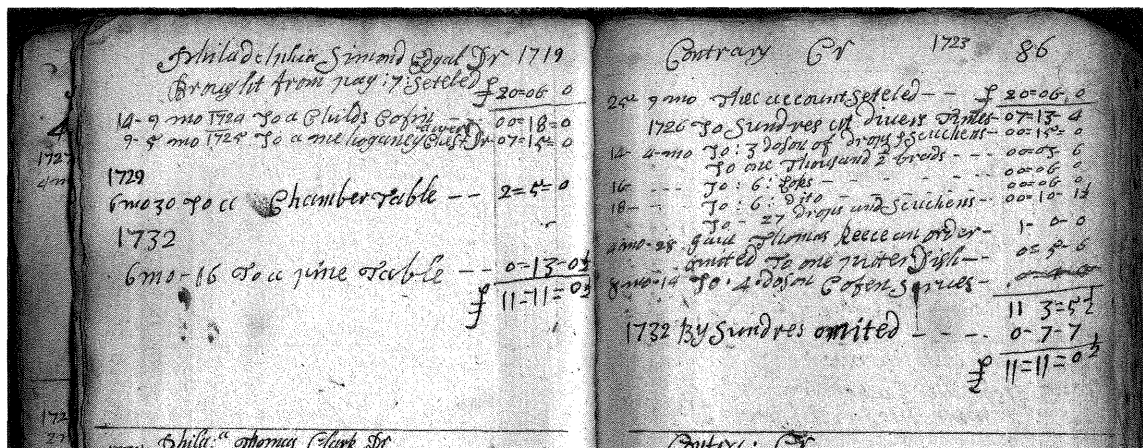


Fig. 4. Account of Simon Edgell, Transactions repeated, in part, and continued to 1732, John Head Account Book, p. 86. George Vaux Papers, American Philosophical Society.

The earliest entries for Edgell are debits for some of Head's most expensive and sophisticated furniture, including a mahogany desk and high chest, and a cedar high chest and dressing table, probably *en suite*. Either Edgell was, in turn, selling these objects to his successful clientele or, as a discriminating artisan, retaining them for himself.⁵⁷

In an era when money was in short supply, Edgell had the wherewithal to settle £4-0-0 of his account with Head, "To Cash By his Wife."⁵⁸ Whatever Edgell's prosperity at this time, his personal life was tinged with tragedy. In the course of 1719-1724, he buried three children.⁵⁹

The first Head entry which refers to Edgell's wares, is an undated £0-10-0 debit to the account of Josier [Josiah] Foster: "To: 6: plaat [plates] d[elivere]d by Simond Edgal." It appears to date from about April 4, 1724, as the entry is inserted immediately above one for that date [2/4/24].⁶⁰ Head does not describe stylistic or dimensional details regarding any plates supplied by Edgell.⁶¹ At the very least, the Head account book establishes a firm, and much earlier, date for Edgell's production of plates, whereas Montgomery could only place them sometime before Edgell's death in 1742.

The variety of the forms Edgell was selling may be derived from the credits to his account. Head recorded credits to Edgell of £0-13-0, "To : 6 : porringers [12/27/24];" £0-6-4, "To : 2 Basens & mending a Tankerd [1/6/25];" £0-5-0, "To : 2 plats & a porringer [3/12/25];" £0-1-6, "To a Salt Siler [cellar][8/2/25];" and £0-5-6, "To one puter Dish [4/28/26]." The last is the only reference to pewter by name with respect to Edgell's wares. It was also on 4/28/26, that Head credited Edgell £1-0-0, as "Gave Thomas Reece [Reese] an order," while Head was simultaneously debiting Thomas Reeca [Reese] the same amount, "To Goods by Simond Edgal."⁶²

Apart from the credit to Reese for those "Goods by Simond Edgal" and one porringer which Head debited a decade later to Thomas Redman, in 1736, none of the forms which Edgell sold to Head show up in debit entries to the accounts of Head's other customers as coming from Head. Thus, Head may have kept the rest of what pewter he got from Edgell for his own use.⁶³ From Head's entries involving Edgell, we know that the Head household was otherwise equipped with various pewter forms, including the two basins and the tankard in the afore-mentioned 1/6/25 transaction.⁶⁴

Obviously, the tankard which Edgell *repaired* for Head, in 1725, may not have been *supplied* by Edgell. Four quart tankards and one pint tankard survive which either bear marks associated with Edgell or are otherwise attributed to him.⁶⁵ The two marked quart tankards with which I am most familiar are both engraved, but the initials on them relate to individuals other than Head. The Dietrich American Foundation tankard bears the initials "SW" on its handle.⁶⁶ The tankard at Winterthur is engraved on its body with tulips and the initials "AM."⁶⁷



Fig. 5. Quart tankard with double-domed lid, H 7" TD $4\frac{7}{16}$ ", BD 5", mark L526 on inside bottom. *Photo courtesy, The Dietrich American Foundation, Philadelphia (#5.1.809), Will Brown, photographer.*

Who engraved those tankards is unknown. The engraving on both is, at best, rudimentary. While I have discovered the name of a pewter importer, Robert Sachervell, who offered to engrave metals in Philadelphia, in 1722, I would assume that his engraving had to be of a higher caliber, as he also worked in gold and silver.⁶⁸ Sachervell's ad would appear to be the earliest mention of an engraver in America connected with the pewter trade.

The 1725 "Salt Siler" reference in the Head account book is of special importance. "Open salts were probably made by most American pewterers, but only a few late eighteenth-century American salts are known," according to Montgomery. The earliest date that Montgomery could cite for the appearance of a salt in an American pewterer's inventory was the 1742 Edgell inventory, which lists "5 doz. 9 salt sellers," at sixteen pence each.⁶⁹ Moreover, the earliest usage that I could find in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of the term "salts" to mean salt cellars is an advertisement of 1740.⁷⁰ Therefore, Head's account book allows us to date such form as being sold by an American pewterer in 1725, two decades earlier.⁷¹

VI. Edgell As A Supplier Of Goods In Base Metals Other Than Pewter

A. Edgell's Copper, Iron, Tin, And Brass

Another discovery about Edgell, deducible from the Head account book, is that he appears to have had a thriving business in brass hardware. In 1726 alone, Edgell sold large quantities of escutcheons, pulls and other hardware to John Head, for affixing to his case furniture and coffins. Edgell's account was credited "To: 4 : dosen & 1/2 of drops and scuchens [escutcheons]" [4/11/26, £0-13-6]; "To: 3 dosen of drops & scuchens" [4/14/26, £0-15-0]; "To - 27 drops and scuchens" [4/18/26, £0-10-1 1/2]; and "To 4 dosen Cofen scrues [screws]" [8/14/26, £0-4-0].⁷²

At the time of his death in 1742, Edgell also left behind considerable quantities of articles in base metals other than pewter. His probate inventory includes over three and a half pages of assorted wares in copper, iron, tin, and brass – often by the dozen or the gross. There are *copper* nails, tea kettles, and pots; *iron* spurs, Jew’s harps, irons, candlesticks, and pots; *tin* pots and kettles; and *brass* buttons, candlesticks, lamps, pipe boxes, spurs, mortars, cocks, handles, nails, Jew’s harps, medals, kettles, and latches. There are, as well, numerous other articles, undoubtedly of one or more of the foregoing base metals, as none of them is inventoried under Edgell’s pewter stock, which is segregated on the first page.⁷³

One of Edgell’s kettles, the metal of which is not identified, had previously been taken in credit by Franklin and a business associate, against debits run up in Edgell’s account through July 25, 1734: “For a Kettle 1/2 between me an[d] Mr Bradford.”⁷⁴ We do not know whether Franklin chose a copper, tin, or brass kettle. He was otherwise partial to pewter.⁷⁵

The cumulative value of non-pewter base metal items in Edgell’s estate exceeded £600, nearly as much as the £794-15-7 valuation accorded his stock of pewter. As Laughlin and other prior writers focused solely on the portion of Edgell’s inventory listing his pewter stock, the extent of Edgell’s trade in other base metals comes as a surprise.⁷⁶

Of course, just because all of this copper, iron, and brass appears in Edgell’s inventory, doesn’t mean that it was all made by him, or even retailed by him. Much of it could have been imported and sold at wholesale, just as another pewterer, Thomas Biles, was doing at this time. “Just Imported from London,” Biles twice advertised in 1745, and “to be sold very cheap by wholesale or retail,” were “ALL Sorts of Pewter, hard Metal and common Brass, Copper and Tinware of all Sorts.”⁷⁷

Simon’s son William was later to advertise, as “Lately imported in the last vessels from London,” a variety of goods, including “brass and tin kettles.”⁷⁸ Indeed, the *Constantine*, in which Edgell owned an interest at the time of his death, had been importing various base metal wares in the five years prior. As the ads for each of these shipments describe them as being on sale at the premises of *other* merchants, and presuming that Edgell held his interest in the *Constantine* at such times, Edgell may have imported these goods as a *distributor*. This may explain why *his* store is never mentioned with regard to the sale of such goods. He must have kept some for his own stock, as those ads are often descriptive of the materials and forms left in Edgell’s probate inventory, including “Brass Cocks for Doors,” “Brass Work for Cabinets,” and “sundry Sorts of Ironmongery Ware,” to name but a few.⁷⁹

B. Edgell as Brazier

Two entries in his probate inventory, and a contemporary advertisement by Edgell, establish that Edgell’s shop was making at least some of his non-pewter stock of base metals. The inventory lists 200 lbs. of “Old Brass,” valued at £8-6-8, and braziers tools as part of an entry to “Sundry Brass Mold and Brassiers Toolls,” at £65-0-0.⁸⁰ Working for Edgell in this aspect of his business, at least until he ran away in 1739, was

a “Servant Man named John Spurstew.” Spurstew was described as “by Trade a Refiner in Copper, but can Work at the Smith’s or Brasier’s Business.”⁸¹ We thus have the first incontrovertible documentary evidence of the shop of an American pewterer also performing brazier’s work.⁸²

VII. English Imports Take Their Toll on Philadelphia’s Metal Workers

A. “A Miserable Prospect”

Thomas Penn, who resided in Pennsylvania from 1732-1741, expressed alarm at the vast quantity of goods being imported from England:

We have Enough English Goods now in Town to serve us for Ten years, a miserable prospect.⁸³

B. “Sellers” Not “Makers”

Franklin specifically addressed the toll that this had taken on Philadelphia’s metal workers:

The working brasiers, cutlers, and pewterers, as well as hatters, who have happened to go over from time to time and settle in the colonies, gradually drop the working part of their business, and import their respective goods from England, whence they can have them cheaper and better than they can make them. They continue their shops indeed, in the same way of dealing, but become *sellers* of brasiery, cutlery, pewter, hats, &, brought from England, instead of being *makers* of those goods.⁸⁴

Franklin no doubt wrote from his first-hand knowledge of the pewter business,⁸⁵ and of Edgell. Franklin had advertised for Edgell, rented property from him, and provided him and his associates with supplies.⁸⁶ Franklin was also aware of Edgell’s finances, having extended him credit and bearing witness to his Will. Franklin remained a creditor at the time of Edgell’s death.⁸⁷

Edgell’s competitors were clearly succumbing to the lure of cheap imported pewter. *E.g.*, on June 5, 1729, Samuel Keimer announced his “new shop open’d” with a “great Variety of English Goods to be sold cheap,” including “fine Pewter.”⁸⁸ Two months later, on August 14, 1729, shopkeeper Ralph Sandiford, decided to quit altogether. He stated that he “intends for England in two months” and is selling out his pewter.⁸⁹

C. Customers, Including Edgell’s Most Prominent, Order Their Pewter Directly From England

To add further insult to injury, some Philadelphians were even ordering their pewter directly from London. On April 30, 1730, Receiver General James Steel bought of Richard King, a London pewterer: “1 Doz staid mettle plates 0.16.0; 1 oval shaving bason 0.5.6; 1 Chamber pot 0.3.6; Engraving 14 pieces with Cypher SM 0.4.8.”⁹⁰ In

1726, Edgell's customer, Logan, imported English pewter: three dozen engraved plates.⁹¹

D. London's "Selling Edge" And The Power Of The Pewterers Company

A modern expert, Kerfoot, concurred with the direness of American pewterers' prospects: "London pewter must have had an overwhelming 'selling edge' over that of local origin...." He doubted the ability of local pewterers "to compete with the exporting members of the all-powerful organization of the Society of Pewterers of London...."⁹²

VIII. Edgell Opens A "Store" At The Wharves, And Changes The Nature And Scope Of His Business

A. No Documentation Of Edgell Selling Pewter Between 1730-1741

When Edgell rented out his High Street retail property in 1728, was it just to change the location of his pewter business? No doubt influenced by the fierce competition from English pewter, he seems to have had a bigger "change" in mind – that of the nature and scope of his business.

No documented Edgell pewter transactions date beyond 1730. Records of other kinds of transactions survive for him in that period, but none involve the sale of pewter.⁹³ Indeed, Edgell has no documentary connection to the sale of pewter - until 1741, when his ship, the *Constantine*, advertises its importation.⁹⁴ The lack of pewter records for Edgell between 1730-1741 may be no coincidence. By 1730, his business may have become more of a wholesale operation, lessening the number and frequency of pewter transactions in the records of his retail customers, and affording modern researchers less opportunities of finding them. Another interpretation, of course, is that he may not have engaged in the pewter business at all during such period.

B. Edgell Moves To The Delaware Wharves; A "Sea Change" In His Business

From at least as early as 1730, Edgell may have had an interest in the ship *Salisbury*, Daniel Williams, Master. At the very least he was its agent as, on June 4, 1730, Edgell offered a reward for its four runaway sailors.⁹⁵ Edgell's son, William, was later to advertise importation of goods on the *Salisbury*.⁹⁶

By July 1, 1731, Edgell was operating his business "at Fishbourne's Wharf." Less of a retail location than the High Street house, the wharf was ideal for import/export trade and transactions in bulk.⁹⁷

C. Edgell Maintains Close Connections With Bristol

The move to the waterfront may have been a consequence of Edgell becoming heavily involved, from at least 1731, with shipping freight and passengers on various ships, particularly those plying the route between Philadelphia and Bristol.⁹⁸ We

also find him selling the time of indentured servants brought over from Bristol⁹⁹ and nearby Milford.¹⁰⁰ Throughout his career, Edgell maintained close ties with Bristol, the large port by his native village of Camely.

In September, 1731, Edgell sought permission from the Meeting to return to Bristol, abruptly canceling his plans a few days later.¹⁰¹ Had he intended to abandon his Philadelphia enterprises? Or, conversely, was he seeking to establish stronger correspondent relationships for those enterprises in his homeland? No record of his intended purpose, or why he cancelled his voyage, exists.

D. First Indications Of Financial Strain; Real Estate Development

Edgell may have been over-extending himself financially, as from 1731, his ground rent payments to the Estate of Richard Hill were frequently past due.¹⁰² This could have resulted from Edgell buying or developing more real estate than he could afford to carry. In late 1731, John Lee announced that he had "Removed to Second Street into one of Mr. Simon Edgell's new houses."¹⁰³

E. Edgell's Relations To Fellow Merchants Bush And Cox

By 1732, Edgell started calling himself a "merchant" and began jointly advertising with fellow merchant, David Bush, in the shipment of freight and passengers to Bristol.¹⁰⁴ At this same time, Edgell also developed a commercial relationship of some sort with pewterer and merchant William Cox.¹⁰⁵ Like Edgell, Cox may have also been involved in the base metals business. In 1732, Edgell paid for an ad and offered a reward for Cox's runaway servant, an English blacksmith, Stephen Parstow. Cox was then said to be "of Brunswick," and thus not yet situated in Philadelphia.¹⁰⁶

F. More Real Estate

In 1733, Edgell bought another property, one much larger than the High Street house he had rented to Franklin in 1728. On November 23, 1733, he paid £110 for a tenement on a 30 x 178 foot lot, between High and Chestnut Streets, from Thomas and Elizabeth Shute.¹⁰⁷

G. A Frequent Advertiser, But Of Services And Goods Unconnected To Pewter

Thereafter, Edgell continued to frequently advertise services and goods, but never the sale of pewter. Thus, in 1734, we find him selling "Lisbon Salt" and "All Sorts of Window GLASS."¹⁰⁸ In September, 1735, Edgell had a "Store, opposite to William Fishbourn's Wharff," from which he sold

...for ready Money, Ozenbrigs, Nails, Shot, Window Glass, Looking Glasses, Irish Linnens, Woolens, and sundry other Merchandise at very reasonable Rates....¹⁰⁹

No word of "pewter," although it may have been part of the "sundry other Merchandise."

H. “Intending To Depart This Province” – A Consequence Of “Differences” In Meeting?

While sales for “ready money” and at “reasonable rates” were a common refrain in Philadelphia advertisements of this period, there is a particular sense of urgency in the 1735 ad. Edgell seems in a rush to dispose of things and quit Philadelphia. He stated that he “is intending to depart this Province the latter end of November” and called for all debts due him to be settled.¹¹⁰ It is curious that he gave no destination, as he did in the other documentation of his intended departures. It is as if he didn’t want people to know where he was headed. Of course, Edgell may just have been planning a short trip and - like many a competent businessman – simply putting his affairs in order prior to departure.

Edgell’s intention to leave Pennsylvania may have been motivated by a “difference” he was having with Gatchell over the Walnut Street property. After protracted dispute, mediated in the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, Gatchell got the property back from Edgell, in November, 1735. The nature of that dispute remains a mystery.¹¹¹ Edgell’s name never again appears in the minutes as a participant in the Meeting. Whether his experience with Gatchell had “soured” him to its affairs is not known.

IX. Edgell Returns To High Street And Further Expands His Commercial And Real Estate Interests

A. Edgell Exports To The Caribbean

On May 5, 1737, we find Edgell back on High Street, now called Market Street. By this time, he had started expanding his operations to include passage and export of freight to the Caribbean, first to Jamaica and then to the Barbadoes.¹¹²

B. “LATELY IMPORTED” – Competition From English Pewter Continues To Stiffen

In the meantime, competition from imported pewter was continuing to stiffen. In November, 1737, Samuel Neave boldly announced that, “at his Store near Fishbourne’s Wharffe, in Water-Street,” he had “LATELY IMPORTED,” among other goods, “Pewter Plates, Dishes, Basons, Porringers and Spoons.”¹¹³ By December of that year, John Steadman, Master of Ship *Charming Nancy*, which undertook direct voyages to London, also had a store in Water Street selling “Pewter Plates.”¹¹⁴ These are but two ads of an ever widening stream of imports during the entire period.

C. Edgell Expands His English Trade To London

In 1737, Edgell sought to expand his English trade to an even more significant port than Bristol. On October 13, 1737, we find him about to depart – this time for London:

All Persons indebted to Simon Edgell of Philadelphia, are desired to pay their respective Debts, or they may expect Trouble. The said Edgel

intends to depart this Province for London, in the Ship *Constantine*, Edward Wright, Commander; and those who have any Demands on him are desired to bring them in that they may be adjusted.¹¹⁵

Unlike the 1735 notice of his departure, with its “fire sale” pricing, there is no sense of urgency to this one. But Edgell may have been experiencing problems with collecting accounts receivable, as he was not only asking to be paid, but was threatening “Trouble” to those who didn’t.¹¹⁶

Between 1739-1741, Edgell’s trade with London started to take off. He frequently advertised the taking of passengers and freight for London.¹¹⁷ In 1741, his ship the *Constantine* twice advertised importation of pewter with other goods from London.¹¹⁸

D. Edgell’s Property Transactions Continue In Philadelphia And Extend Beyond It

In the meantime, Edgell’s engaged in further real estate transactions. In 1738, he was “empowered to sell” a “New Brick House in Market Street.”¹¹⁹ As the advertisement doesn’t state whether he had any ownership interest in the property, and Franklin never debited Edgell for the ad, perhaps he didn’t.

Edgell’s real estate interests extended outside of Philadelphia, as well. In 1739, he bought a piece of ground on Market Street in New Castle, Delaware, south of both Philadelphia and Wilmington, and closer to the mouth of the Delaware River. The property was an ideal commercial location as it adjoined the “publick Market Place.”¹²⁰

In 1741, Edgell advertised his sale of a 200-acre tract of woodland with ten acres of meadow, located sixteen miles from Philadelphia.¹²¹ This sale may have been to aid the settlement of Edgell’s debts, the extent of which was soon be publicly revealed.¹²²

X. Edgell And The Indian Trade

Another overlooked aspect of Edgell’s business was his connection to American Indian trade. This may have been the result of Edgell’s partnership with Edward Shippen. The two were in partnership from as early as August 25, 1737 until at least October 8, 1741, advertising freight and passage on the ship *Constantine*.¹²³

Shippen had earlier been a partner of James Logan, in the firm of “Logan & Shippen.”¹²⁴ Part of Logan’s prosperity was based on American Indian trade, which he had been appointed to supervise. That Edgell should appear active in supplying that trade after becoming aligned with Shippen, may have been a result of earlier experience and contacts that Shippen developed with Logan.

Edgell’s probate inventory is overflowing with Indian trade goods. While it may be argued that some items could just as easily be used by others, e.g., “188 [gross of] Beads” and “12,000 Flints,” it is beyond cavil that many must pertain to that market, including, “49 Gross & 9 Doz[en] Indian Rings” and “6 Doz & 9 Tomhawks.” Furs and

peltry gotten from Indian traders had been a basis of Logan's wealth. In Edgell's inventory, we find £90 worth of "Buckskins," £16-3-4 of "foxes," and £4-3-4 of "Rackones."¹²⁵

Edgell had been the Administrator of the Estate of Edward Annely, an Indian trader.¹²⁶ Edgell may have gotten much of that fur from Annely and, in turn, sold to him many of the Indian trade goods listed in Annely's inventory, e.g., "191 Strings of Indian Beeds," as not much pewter is listed there, and yet £496-1-0, is later paid from Annely's estate into Edgell's.¹²⁷

Edgell may have also had some connection to another Indian trader, Isaac Miranda, who settled in Indian country, on Conoy Creek (now part of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania). Whatever the extent of their relations, Miranda's 1732 Will makes it clear that he was not in debt to Edgell: "My Deeds is in Simon Edgell hands in the High Street in Philadelphia to whom I owe not a penny."¹²⁸

Little has been written previously about Edgell's connection to the Indian trade. I could find only one such reference in secondary sources. Nicholas Wainwright has George Croghan, an Indian trader, purchasing large quantities of trade goods in his own name "from Edgells of Philadelphia."¹²⁹ William Edgell dealt in materials of the sort utilized in Indian trade, some of which also appear in Simon Edgell's inventory. William may have thus chosen to proceed with that aspect of his late father's business.¹³⁰

XI. Edgell The "Merchant"

Other writers have made much of the fact that Edgell was described in contemporary documents as a "pewterer" at various stages of his time in Philadelphia.¹³¹ While he frequently appears so in his real estate transactions,¹³² he does so only once in any advertisement – in 1739, when he was seeking Spurstew, his runaway copper refiner/smith/brazier.¹³³

This is not inconsistent with the practice of other Philadelphia pewterers during Edgell's period. Only one other, Thomas Biles, ever identified himself in ads as a "pewterer."¹³⁴ (Perhaps, they weren't presenting themselves in print as pewterers, for many the same reasons here discussed re Edgell.)

Until the 1741 advertisements for the importation of pewter aboard the *Constantine*, no mention of "pewter" or its variant names, e.g. hard metal, appears in any ad connected to Edgell. That does not necessarily mean that he wasn't selling or making any pewter between the last of his documented transactions in 1717-1730 and that date. It may simply be that he was so well known as a pewterer, that he didn't need to advertise his pewter.¹³⁵ Indeed, of his many advertisements, most describe Edgell only by name with no mention of an address.¹³⁶

Perhaps, Edgell took out ads just for those goods and services which he felt would not otherwise sell - or which he needed to unload in a hurry, as when he intended to leave the province in 1735. Another reason may be that, as he had more to sell than pewter, it may have made good business sense not to describe himself as a specialist.

Yet another explanation, and one which may be hard for collectors of his marked and attributed pewter to swallow, may be that Edgell was selling *only* imported pewter and did not care to style himself a “pewterer” with respect to any goods he was not making. However, one would have to explain away the “Old Pewter” and “Brass Mold” in his inventory, essentials of the American pewterers’ craft.¹³⁷

Of all the possible explanations of why Edgell never mentioned in his ads that he was selling pewter and only once described himself as a “pewterer,” one appears the most likely. Edgell may have acted more as a wholesaler or distributor of pewter.¹³⁸ If others were selling his pewter, be it imported or locally made, he may not have wanted to compete with them by mentioning pewter among the goods that he had for sale.¹³⁹ Montgomery may have had an inkling of this when he queried: “Did...Edgell...supply traders and storekeepers with his wares for resale?...”¹⁴⁰ One such trader or storekeeper may have been joiner/merchant John Head, who debited “Goods by Simond Edgal” to the account of one of his own customers, Thomas Reese, while simultaneously crediting Edgell for “an order.”¹⁴¹

Whatever the extent of his activities as a pewterer, it is clear that by 1732, Edgell repeatedly described himself *in print* as a “merchant,” and conducted substantial commercial transactions that had nothing whatsoever to do with pewter. The earliest description of Edgell as a “merchant” appears on January 4, 1732: “Freighters or Passengers” for the Brigantine *Swallow* bound for Bristol were instructed that they “may agree with Simon Edgel or David Bush, Merchants in Philadelphia.”¹⁴²

Indeed, the “last word” on what Edgell was doing at the time of his death is his own. In his Will, Edgell chose to style himself not as a “pewterer,” but as a “Merchant.”¹⁴³ He must have therefore felt strongly about being a merchant, as it was common practice for successful Philadelphia artisans-turned-merchants, particularly Quakers, to continue to describe themselves by their original trade, rather than any station achieved later, when preparing their testamentary documents - the final record of how they wished to be remembered.¹⁴⁴

XII. Edgell And The Importation of Pewter

A. Edgell’s Debts To Those Importing Pewter

1. David Bush

David Bush was the largest single creditor of Edgell’s Estate, being owed a total of £867.¹⁴⁵ Laughlin’s discussion of the value of Edgell’s probate inventory, regrettably, gives a misleadingly prosperous impression of Edgell’s finances at his demise.

While it is true that “[e]xclusive of real estate Edgell owned at the time of his death possessions valued at almost forty-five hundred pounds [£4474-1-8 to be precise],” Laughlin fails to mention Edgell’s more than one hundred “outstanding Debts,” inventoried in the last two pages as totalling £5710-1-3, an enormous sum – and one which far exceeded the value of Edgell’s personalty.¹⁴⁶

Like many of those with close commercial ties to Edgell, Bush was active in the importation of pewter. In 1741, Bush was selling “pewter dishes, plates and spoons...,” at his Store in Wilmington, described as “Just Imported from London and Liverpool.”¹⁴⁷ Given the proximity of the ad to Edgell’s death in 1742, and the size of Bush’s probated debt in Edgell’s inventory, the suggestion is inescapable that at least a portion of the pewter in that inventory may have been imported by Bush.¹⁴⁸

2. Benjamin Franklin and Myles Strickland

Others with close ties with Edgell who were selling imported pewter, included two of the three witnesses to his Will. In 1742, Franklin advertised that he had “Just imported from London...fine Pewter Stands proper for Offices and Counting-houses.”¹⁴⁹ In August 1744, another witness, Myles Strickland, was selling “London Pewter” in Market Street.¹⁵⁰

B. Edgell’s Ship *Constantine* Imports Pewter

While Laughlin states that Edgell’s offers, in 1737 and 1738, “to book space for passengers or freight in the brig *Constantine*” make it “evident that Edgell had become a merchant on a large scale,” Laughlin apparently did not realize that the *Constantine* directly links Edgell to the importation of pewter to Philadelphia.¹⁵¹

Edgell owned “a Quarter Part” of the *Constantine*.¹⁵² In 1741, the year prior to his death, Edgell’s ship *twice* advertised the importation of pewter from England:

Just imported in the Ship *Constantine*, Capt. Wright from London, and to be SOLD by JOHN POLE, at his Store...hard and common metal pewter dishes, plates basons, porringers, mugs, tankards and spoons....¹⁵³

That Edgell’s ship was importing pewter to be sold by one of his competitors, suggests that Edgell was supplying him. Why else would he allow a competitor to sell forms that all appear in his own inventory? Obviously, the *Constantine* could also have been importing pewter for Edgell to wholesale or retail to others not named in those ads.

C. “Sundrys Goods As Per Invoice By Ship *Constantine*”

With all of the ads that Edgell was taking out to ship freight to Bristol or London, it may seem odd that there are none for goods imported from those ports for sale at his own premises. Some might argue that he never advertised imported pewter for sale, because he had none to sell.¹⁵⁴ But, an equally valid deduction may be that he never advertised imported pewter – or, indeed, any pewter – because he was acting principally as a middleman, distributing pewter to be sold by others. Yet another explanation may be that he was so well known as a pewterer that he didn’t need to advertise. Also, and this may seem like heresy to some, if Edgell was applying his own marks to imported pewter, or mixing articles of pewter marked by others with pewter of his own make, he may not have wanted to advertise those practices, lest they detract from any reputation he had built as a maker.

Pewter may have been part of the “Sundrys [sic] Goods as per Invoice by Ship *Constantine*” listed at £720 in Edgell’s inventory, but the goods are not more specifically described.¹⁵⁵ There was no need for the appraisers to have done so, as they could rely on the “Invoice.” Regrettably, the invoice is not known to have survived.

Those supporting the commonly held belief that *all* of the pewter listed in Edgell’s inventory was made by his own hand or shop, might make the following argument: if his *Constantine* “Sundrys Goods” included pewter, then the entry should have appeared on either of the inventory pages enumerating pewter.¹⁵⁶ Not so. The term “Sundrys Goods” implies that they were of a diverse nature. Thus, even if partly pewter, the entry appropriately appears on a page of miscellaneous assets.

D. Edgell’s Debt To Captain Henry Harrison, Importer of Pewter

Immediately following the “Sundry Goods as per Invoice by Ship *Constantine*” in Edgell’s inventory is another entry marked “Ditto by Capt. Harrison,” worth £50.¹⁵⁷ The arguments regarding the *Constantine* entry apply equally to this one, as Captain Henry Harrison also imported pewter to Philadelphia. *E.g.*, in 1743, barely a year after Edgell’s inventory was appraised, it was advertised that the ship *Williams*, of which Harrison was Master, had “PEWTER” which was “Just imported from LONDON.” It was “to be Sold by JAMES & DANIEL BENEZET, at their Store on Pemberton’s Wharf.”¹⁵⁸ Thus, some or all of the debt owed Harrison may have been for pewter in Edgell’s inventory that Harrison had imported earlier. The following year, 1744, we find “Just imported from London, in the *Argyle*, John Seymour, master & the *Williams*, Henry Harrison” an assortment of goods, including “pewter of different sorts.”¹⁵⁹

E. Summing Up Edgell’s Connections To The Imported Pewter Trade

In sum, Edgell’s ship was importing pewter. His friends and business associates, to whom he owed money, were importing pewter. His competitors were either importing pewter, going into other businesses, or getting out of business. His most prominent retail customer, Logan, was buying pewter directly from abroad. Franklin, a respected contemporary with an intimate knowledge of Edgell’s affairs, was decrying the plight of local metalworkers forced to *sell* imported wares rather than *make* their own. For more than a decade and at his death, Edgell had dubbed himself a “merchant,” and had never advertised goods for sale as a “pewterer.” There is thus substantial, credible, circumstantial weight for the proposition that a good part of what Edgell sold - and of what remained in his inventory after his death - was imported.

XIII. Pewter Left In Edgell’s Probate Inventory

A. Edgell’s Stock of Pewter At His Death

On the first page of Edgell’s probate inventory, under the heading “Pewter Viz.,” is listed what I presume to be the stock of Edgell’s pewter business. It consists of some 9,233 items, arranged in 35 entries. Subtracting the 800 lbs. of “Old Pewter,” valued at £33-6-8, also listed on that page, we have a value of £761-8-11 for those items.¹⁶⁰

B. Edgell's Household Pewter At His Death

On the sixth page of the inventory, never previously cited, we have additional items of pewter. As these entries come after items of furniture and other small quantities of domestic goods, they appear to be part of Edgell's household inventory rather than the stock for his business. They are "6 Doz hard mettall Plats 2 Doz Dishes," at £7-0-0; and "1 Pewter Collender Scymer & Ladle," valued at 5 shillings.¹⁶¹

Incidentally, the items of silver and furniture listed, in that section, show that Edgell lived "in style." He had "183 Ounces of Wrought Plate," valued at £73-4-0. Gone was the, by then unfashionable, cedar high chest and dressing table sold to him by John Head. In their stead, Edgell had two pair of *mahogany* high chests and dressing tables – unusually extravagant for Philadelphians.¹⁶² Such "high living" may have contributed to Edgell's massive debt load.

C. The Circumstantial Evidence That Edgell Was Making Pewter At The Time Of His Death

Notwithstanding Edgell's prominence in a larger commercial context, there can be no question that, at the end of his days, he possessed the necessary raw material ("Old Pewter"),¹⁶³ personnel (himself), and equipment ("Sundry Brass Mold and Brassiers Toolls"), with which to make pewter. Garland Pass believes that these two items of inventory are "strong evidence" that Edgell was making pewter until his death. He argues that, as material constituted so much of the cost of new pewter, Edgell could still have profited from casting if he could buy old pewter at bargain prices.¹⁶⁴ This may explain why, despite the onslaught of ads for imported pewter, contemporary ads were still being placed for the purchase of old pewter.¹⁶⁵

There is no mention in Edgell's inventory or Will as to the quantity or purpose of the "Sundry Brass Mold."¹⁶⁶ But, given the £65 valuation, it is clear that the molds pertain to the expensive bronze molds required for the casting of pewter, rather than the molds used to cast brass – which were of wood.¹⁶⁷ This puts to rest, at least in the case of Edgell, Kerfoot's skepticism that he may have been a "pewterer" only in name, lacking the funds necessary to acquire "the valuable outfit of expensive gun-metal moulds needed for the full practice of that craft."¹⁶⁸

I could find no other circumstantial evidence that Edgell was actually *making* pewter. *Cf.*, the only documentation of any contemporary Philadelphia pewterer expressly stating that he was making pewter, the May 18, 1749 advertisement of Samuel Robeson, stating that

...he is now supplied with a fresh quantity of block tin for making STILL WORMS, and continues to make worms of block tin or pewter, of any dimensions required, and in the best manner, at reasonable rates.¹⁶⁹

Robeson's competition was not long in coming. By August of that year, merchant William Coleman advertised

...12 copper stills of different sizes,...with heads and pewter worms compleat, being English make, and very substantial.¹⁷⁰

D. How Much Of Edgell's Inventory Was Made By Him, How Much By Others, How Much Imported?

1. The Survival Of Only A Handful Of Edgell-marked Pewter Supports The Proposition That His Inventory Contained Imported Pewter

The question remains as to how many of the 9,233 items of pewter in his stock were made by Edgell. Many authors wrongly assumed that any piece listed in his probate inventory had to have been made by Edgell.¹⁷¹ None of them adequately addressed the possibility that any, if not most, could have been supplied to him by others locally or imported.

Nor did they ever question why so few pieces of marked-Edgell pewter survive, given the vast quantity of his own pewter on hand at the time of his death and the presumably thousands of other pieces he would have sold in the nearly three decades that he worked in Philadelphia. More than mere attrition played a role, in my opinion.

My review of Edgell's *entire* probate inventory in the context of other extant records, suggests – at least to me - that it is more likely than not, that pewter was being imported from England by Edgell and his business associates. A good portion of that pewter was probably being sold by Edgell at wholesale through his own stores and distributed through those of other merchants. Edgell's unsold imported pewter remained in his probate inventory, together with whatever unknown amount was made by him and any assistants. *If the imported pewter wares didn't bear his marks to begin with, and he wasn't marking them with his own marks (or, at the very least, he wasn't marking them until he sold them), then that would explain why so little pewter with his marks survives, despite the large quantities found in his inventory. It would also help us understand why unmarked pewter of designs identical to Edgell's survives that has, rightly or wrongly, been attributed to him.*

2. Pewterers Supplying Pewter, Components, And Molds To Other Pewterers, As Well As Unmarked Pewter To Be Marked By Those Pewterers Selling It

I am indebted to Peter Hayward for advising me that pewter experts “are finding increasing evidence that English pewterers sold goods to one another for re-sale and that the mark applied was often that of the pewterer who bought the goods rather than the pewterer who made them.” Pewterers also appear to have “traded parts among themselves.” The “evidence for this trade is in part based on careful measurements showing that items bearing quite different pewterers' marks actually came from the same mould, and in part on the occasional piece that bears the marks of two different pewterers.”¹⁷²

Don Herr concurs: “Pewterers in the Colonies did purchase pewter from other pewterers.” By way of example, and crediting Don Fennimore, Herr states that Henry Will's Account Book “records Henry Will selling funnels to Frederick Bassett.” Herr

goes on to state that “Funnels have survived that are marked with a Henry Will mark that have the same dimensions and look exactly like those bearing the mark of Frederick Bassett.”¹⁷³ While Henry Will’s account book documents later 18th century instances of this practice, is it not possible that Edgell was doing the same?

One authority even states that pewterers exchanged and sold, among themselves, their molds for making pewter.¹⁷⁴ This would make sense, given the value of those molds, especially for those hard-pressed in business, going out of business, or whose estates, like Edgell’s, needed to raise cash to pay debts. As Edgell’s son William didn’t succeed him in the pewter business, Edgell’s £65 of molds and tools, if unsold, would otherwise have gone to waste.

3. Pewter Components In Edgell’s Inventory

Several pewter entries in the Edgell probate inventory may relate to components, rather than to finished articles. They are “6 Funnells,” at 3 shillings six pence a piece; “14 Bed Pan Handles,” at a shilling each; and “11 Bottoms For Cullenders,” also at a shilling each. As “18 Cullenders,” presumably complete, were valued at eleven shillings a piece, the “11 Bottoms” were unquestionably just parts not yet incorporated.¹⁷⁵

The existence of these components raises further questions. Who made these components? Did Edgell? Or, were they acquired from another Philadelphia pewterer or from abroad? Clearly, the sort of measuring and comparisons that Peter and Don wrote to me about, need to be done with Edgell’s pieces, as well.

Whether or not Edgell applied his mark to pewter not made by him can also not be ascertained without first comparing his marked pieces to identical-looking pieces by other pewterers. The records of other pewterers may also shed light on whether Edgell was being shipped marked or unmarked pieces. As Don Herr’s list includes more than one example of unmarked pewter that is otherwise similar to marked Edgell pieces, and so attributed to him, this may equally support the propositions that either he was receiving unmarked pieces from elsewhere or that others were working from the same molds.

What is certain is that the mark of the later 18th century New York pewterer, André Michel, which is next to those of Edgell on the 19” dish at Winterthur, does not mean that Michel made that piece.¹⁷⁶ However, they do corroborate that an American pewterer was marking something not made by him. Whether such practice was carried on in Edgell’s Philadelphia, I do not know. I did find one instance where a pewterer, shortly after Edgell’s decease, was buying up old pewter not just to melt it, but in order to repair and recycle it. At the sign of the Globe in Market Street, Simon Wyer was offering that

...all sorts of old pewter dishes and plates, &c. that by long use or neglect of servants are batter’d, bruised, melted or damaged, shall be mended (if possible) neat and cheap.¹⁷⁷

Whether or not Wyer then applied his own mark, as Michel did to Edgell’s dish, I am similarly unaware.



Fig. 6. Dish, D 19", marks 528a and 529a on back plus a mark of New York pewterer, André Michel. Also partial mark L528a on front brim. Hammered on bouge only. Believed by some to be the largest extant dish made by an American pewterer.
Photo courtesy Winterthur Museum (#53.28).

XIV. Conclusion: An Invitation To Others

Now that we have the names of many of those connected with the importation of pewter to Philadelphia - Edgell, his business associates and creditors, as well as those of their ships and captains – additional work remains. References to them must now be gleaned from London and Bristol port records, account and letter books of freight forwarders in those ports (*i.e.*, Edgell's English counterparts), ships' captains, and English pewterers. Any newly discovered accounting papers and correspondence of Philadelphia's pewterers, allied artisans (braziers, engravers, etc.), and merchants, must be similarly examined.

Through such concerted and integrated efforts, pewter historians may yet determine the forms, components, quantities, and pricing of pewter being ordered by Edgell and his contemporaries in Philadelphia; and to what extent components, molds and finished articles of pewter, imported or not, were being exchanged and distributed among them.

I hope other scholars find as much fascination in their inquiries as I have in this one.

Endnotes:

¹“Simon Edgell’s pewter is among the earliest and rarest of surviving American pewter.” He is also “the earliest Pennsylvania pewterer whose pewter has survived.” Donald M. Herr, *Pewter in Pennsylvania German Churches* (Birdsboro, PA: Pennsylvania German Society, 1995) vol. 29, pp. 130-131. *In an accompanying article, Don has compiled a list of fifteen pieces that either bear marks associated with Edgell or are otherwise attributed to him. I take no position as to whether any of those pieces were, in fact, made by Edgell or his shop.*

² The quoted phrase is from Robert J. Wilson III, “Early American Account Books: Interpretation, Cataloguing, and Use,” American Association for State and Local History, *Technical Leaflet* 140, Winterthur Museum Library, *Downs Collection*, p. 1. Jeanne Solensky kindly brought this leaflet to my attention.

³ My thanks to the still anonymous member of PCCA who had suggested to Garland Pass that I be invited to “modify” for publication here my prior research on Edgell, which appeared as Chapter VI. “‘Puter:’ John Head’s relationship with Pewterer Simon Edgell,” and Chapter X. “Inside Head’s Shop” A. “Materials and Supplies” 3. “Furniture Hardware,” in Jay Robert Stiefel, “Philadelphia Cabinetmaking and Commerce, 1718-1753: the Account Book of John Head,” published together with Jay Robert Stiefel, “The Head Account Book As Artifact,” in American Philosophical Society, *Library Bulletin*, new series, vol. 1, no. 1 (Winter 2001) [<http://www.amphilsoc.org/library/bulletin/2001/head.htm>]. Pass/Stiefel e-mail, February 11, 2002. Having found much more about Edgell in my ensuing “modification,” Garland and others encouraged the expansion of this article beyond its original scope. Particular thanks are due to Garland and his fellow pewter enthusiasts who answered my many questions and posed others, including PCCA members Donald Herr, Donald Fennimore, Ian Robinson, and Charles Swain; British Pewter Society Secretary Peter Hayward and his wife Trish; and Ronald Homer, Archivist of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers [“WCP” or the “Company”]. I am also appreciative of the photographs and information supplied by private collectors and the curators of museums and foundations, including the “two Dons,” H. Richard Dietrich, Jr. and Deborah M. Rebeck, Curator of the Dietrich American Foundation; Laura Stutman, Curator of Stenton; and Beth Carver Wees, Curator of American Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. No less gratitude is due to the librarians, curators, and personnel of the libraries and repositories I visited in Philadelphia, Boston, and London, including Rachel Onuf, Director of Archives at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania [“HSP”]; Robert S. Cox, Manuscripts Librarian, and Frank Margeson, Photographer, at the American Philosophical Society [“APS”]; Diana Franzusoff Peterson, Curator, and her assistant, Joelle Bertholet, at the Quaker Collections, Haverford College; and Pat O’Donnell and Christopher Densmore, Curators at the Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College. This article is also dedicated to the memory of my late father, Israel Stiefel (1898-1966). As with so many of us, collecting and history were also his escapes. Having made his own unique contributions to preserving Philadelphia’s past, he would no doubt have enjoyed the voyage of return on which we now embark.

⁴ “No account or letter book of an eighteenth-century, or earlier, American pewterer has been located.” Charles F. Montgomery, *A History of American Pewter* (New York: Praeger, 1973), p. 2. Charles Montgomery (1910-1978) successively directed the American Decorative Arts programs at Winterthur Museum and at Yale University. Unknown to Montgomery at the time of the publication of his work, was the account book of New York pewterer Henry Will, acquired by Winterthur in 1995. Will’s account book was profiled in these pages by Donald L. Fennimore, *PCCA, Bulletin*, vol. 11, no. 5, pp. 145-147 (Spring, 1996); and has since been published in facsimile edition through a generous grant from The Chipstone Foundation: Donald L. Fennimore, *Henry Will Account Book, A Record Of His Pewtering And Related Activities In New York City And Albany From 1763 To 1800* (Morgantown, PA: Masthof Press, 1996).

⁵ Montgomery, *A History of American Pewter*, pp. 3-4. Regrettably, the discoveries of account books, described in my work on John Head and here, come too late to be shared with Montgomery, who died in 1978.

⁶ *Id.*, Montgomery, *A History of American Pewter*, pp. 28, 55, 116, 137; “Inventory and Appraisal of Goods and Chattels belonging to Estate of Simon Edgell Deceased – Taken 27th August 1742” by Myles Strickland and Evan Morgan, *Downs Collection*, Winterthur, Ephemera No. 56x7-1 [“*Edgell Probate Inventory*”].

⁷ J. B. Kerfoot, *American Pewter* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1942), pp. 30-31.

⁸ Ledlie Irwin Laughlin, *Pewter in America: Its Makers and Their Marks* vols. 1-2 (Barre, MA: Barre Publishers 1969), vol. 3 (1971), *passim*.

- ⁹ Orders of Court of Assistants, *WCP*, on deposit with the Guildhall Library, London, vol. 48, ms7090/8, entry under June 18, 1702.
- ¹⁰ Presentment of Apprentices, *WCP*, Guildhall Library, vol. 14, ms7101, p. 6, under date of June 18, 1702.
- ¹¹ I am most grateful to Trish Hayward, wife of Peter Hayward, Secretary of The Pewter Society, for this information, the result of what she described, with characteristic British understatement, as a "useful day at the Somerset Record Office." Hayward/Stiefel e-mail, August 3, 2002. The parish is now part of Avon, and is located near Bristol. We shall see later how Simon Edgell became an active member of the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends. Christopher Densmore, Curator of the Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, suggested to me that, while *pro forma* baptisms of Quakers are known to have taken place in England, Simon Edgell's was probably real. His father, as clerk of the parish would have had to receive oaths which, were he a Quaker, he could not have done. Thus, Simon Edgell, our pewterer, appears not to have been born a Quaker.
- ¹² Simon the pewterer's youngest sibling, Richard, baptized the 19th day of the 1st month 1701, had no less than three sons named Simon, presumably because the first two did not long survive. They were baptized, respectively, in 1729, 1734, and 1739.
- ¹³ I found no evidence of his having been born in London or having any other connection to it until his presentment to the Pewterers Company, in 1702. *Contra*, "Simon Edgell was born in England, probably London, about 1688." Donald L. Fennimore, "Simon Edgell," in *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1976), p. 23 (no citation given). Don has since become Curator of Metals at Winterthur, where he has served with distinction.
- ¹⁴ Radway Jackson, *English Pewter Touchmarks* (London: W. Foulsham & Co. Ltd.: 1970), p. 63, touch-mark for "William Hux, London, 1700-1729."
- ¹⁵ Orders of Court of Assistants, *WCP*, vol. 48, ms7090/8, entry under June 24, 1700.
- ¹⁶ There is a small, but important, inconsistency in the recent publication of The Pewter Society as to which "William Hux" Edgell was apprenticed. Carl Ricketts, *Pewterers of London 1600-1900* (Welshpool, Powys: The Pewter Society, 2001). Under the listing for Edgell, on page 89, it states that he was apprenticed to "William Hux I." But, on page 126, it identifies William Hux I as having not been admitted to the freedom of the Company until 1751. Under the preceding listing on page 126, for "William Thomas Hux," Edgell is listed as that pewterer's apprentice. The original records of the Company, which I have examined and cited, associate Edgell only with a "William Hux." Neither entry for Edgell identifies Hux as a "William Thomas Hux." The William Hux to whom Edgell was apprenticed was that admitted to the Company in 1700, however he may be variously referred elsewhere.
- ¹⁷ Orders of the Court of Assistants, *WCP*, Guildhall Library, ms7090/8, entry under June 22, 1704; Charles Welch, *History of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers of the City of London*, vol. 2 (London: Blades, East & Blades, 1902), p. 174; Ricketts, *Pewterers of London*, p. 126, under listing for "William Thomas Hux."
- ¹⁸ The Court ordered that henceforth none shall make "any sort of pewter watch cases of any other than ffine mettles." Orders of the Court of Assistants, *WCP*, Guildhall Library, ms7090/8, entry under March 24, 1714; Charles Welch, *History of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers of the City of London*, vol. 2, pp. 180-181; Ricketts, *Pewterers of London*, p. 126, under listing for "William Thomas Hux."
- ¹⁹ As none of the marks associated with Edgell bear any relation to that of Hux, Edgell may have had no great desire to commemorate their former relationship. Cf., "[it]...frequently happened that a young pewterer (with permission) adopted the motifs of, or devices similar to those which had been used by, his former master..." Jackson, *English Pewter Touchmarks*, p. 15.
- ²⁰ It is part of the new installation at the Guildhall Library, ref. no. 1209. My thanks to my friends in the Clockmakers Company, freemen Richard A. Mones, M.D., and Sir George White, Bt., for bringing the Hux watch to my attention, on a September 9, 2002 visit. Sir George, a past Master, serves as Keeper of the collection.
- ²¹ Orders of Court of Assistants, *WCP*, vol. 48, ms7090/8, entry under October 13, 1709; Yeomanry & Livery Lists, *WCP*, Guildhall Library, London, ms7099, entry under October 13, 1709; Audit Book 31, *WCP*, Guildhall Library, ms7086/4, entry under October 13, 1709.
- ²² Audit Book 31, *WCP*, ms7086/4, entry under October 13, 1709.
- ²³ I must respectfully disagree with Ricketts as to the continued viability of certain 16th century regulations by the time that Edgell and his contemporaries were seeking to gain their freedom of London livery companies. Ricketts states:

...an order of the City authorities in 1556 that no one should be admitted a freeman of the City by apprenticeship under the age of 24 (though freedom by patrimony could be granted at age 21) and this was followed in 1563 by the crown's Statute of Artificers which required apprentices to be at least 24 years old when they finished their term. It was therefore rather uncommon for anyone under 17 years old to be bound as an apprentice. Ricketts, *Pewterers of London*, p. 13.

Contra, Vivienne E. Aldous, *My Ancestors Were Freemen of the City of London* (London: Society of Genealogists, 1999), p. 24:

[The age of 24] requirement [of the 27 September 1556 city by-law] did not last, or was probably not observed. Certainly by the late 17th century, from when records of freedom admissions survive in quantity, the minimum age of admission was 21, and a large proportion of freemen were admitted at that age, although some were much older.

At the time of her publication, Aldous, a "professional archivist at the Corporation of London Records Office" had "fourteen years...[of] experience of the city freedom admission papers." *Id.*, pp. ii, 24. The lack of adherence to the "age of 24" requirement may have been a consequence of the devastating effects of the Great Fire in London, in 1666. E.g., *the Rebuilding Act* forced the London's livery companies to suspend their regulations against "foreign" workers. Adam Bowett, *English Furniture 1660-1714 From Charles II to Queen Anne* (Woodbridge, England: Antique Collectors' Club, 2002), p. 29. The enforcement of other laws and rules pertaining to the freedom of those companies may thus have lapsed by way of necessity, never to return in full force and effect.

²⁴ Whether there were other pewterers in Simon's family is open to question. Garland Pass asked me to specifically investigate William Edgell. William was a Massachusetts pewterer and contemporary of Simon. Laughlin, *Pewter in America*, vol. 1, p. 62. Coincidences abound. First, Simon had a brother William, baptized the 17th of the 6th month 1700. Camely parish records, Somerset Record Office. Second, in an age when it was customary to name one's son after one's brother, Simon had a son, William; and William of Massachusetts had a son, Simon (born 1733). Third, each had a daughter named Rebecca, perhaps after a common grandmother, Rebecca Maggs of Camely. Simon Edgell's Will, *Philadelphia Wills 1742-269* ["*Edgell Will*"], original at HSP; J. H. Temple, *History of Framingham, Massachusetts* (Framingham: 1887), p. 539. But William, Simon and Rebecca were all among the most common names of that era. No blood relationship between Simon and William can thus be solely based on such coincidences. No birth date for William of Massachusetts appears in any extant Massachusetts record. In the earliest documentation I could find for him, he is identified as "Wm. Edgell of Boston" at the time of his August 2, 1725 marriage, in Marblehead, to "Eleb. [Elizabeth] Norman of Marblehead," before the Rev. Mr. John Barnard. *A Volume of Records Relating to the Early History of Boston Containing Boston Marriages, etc.* (Boston: Municipal Printing Office, 1903), p. 306. William of Boston is presumably dead by 1739, when Elizabeth marries her second husband, Isaac How, in Framingham. Temple, *History of Framingham*, p. 539. William is certainly dead by December 12, 1743, when Abishai Brown is appointed guardian of "William Edgell, a Minor in his 18th year of age, son of William Edgell late of Lexington in County of Middlesex Deceased." Middlesex County, Massachusetts, *Probate Records*, Docket #6856, First Series, 1648-1929, available at the New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston. Independent scholar Martha Willoughby of New York graciously did an online search of William Edgell/Edgehill of Boston, and found references that he "came from England cir. 1720-2" and "d. in England." Willoughby/Stiefel e-mail, October 4, 2002, online search of Ancestry.com, ID #112006, citing "Heywood's Westminster, Mass.; Marblehead Vital Records, Vol. I, p. 366; Vol. II, p. 306." But, we still don't know if this English émigré William is the one baptized as Simon's brother in Somerset. We are left with two Edgells working contemporaneously as pewterers in America, but cannot establish a relationship between them.

²⁵ Jackson states that a freeman could only open his shop after he had been granted permission to register his mark, which permission came "when the Court of the Pewterers' Company was satisfied that the newly fledged pewterer was a capable craftsman, and had sufficient capital for the purpose." Jackson, *English Pewter Touchmarks*, p. 14. As there is no mention of Edgell having applied for or being denied such permission by the Court, no adverse inference should be drawn from his not having either registered a mark or opened a shop with the Court's permission. Marks attributed to Simon Edgell contain variations of his name or his initials, sometimes the word "Philadelphia," and often a left-facing bird. E.g., Carl Jacobs, *Guide to American Pewter* (New York: McBride Company, 1957), p. 88; Ralph M. & Terry Kovel, *A Directory of American Silver, Pewter and Silver Plate* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1961), p. 310. My first thought was that Edgell may have been using the bird as a punning device, viz., an eagle for Edgell, a form of trade advertisement to attract attention. See, generally, Kenneth Ulliyett, *PEWTER*:

A Guide for Collectors (London: Frederick Muller, 1973), pp. 63, 120-122 [Appendix A], which cites many examples of London pewterers using punning devices in their marks, including two contemporaneous to Edgell: "Thomas Buckby...a buck's head (1718)," and "Thomas Hawkins...a hawk upon a woosack, usually in a circle (1742)." However, Don Herr assures me that Edgell's birds look less like eagles and more like ducks!

²⁶ Fennimore, "Simon Edgell (c. 1688-1742)," *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art*, p. 23.

²⁷ Samuel Hazard, *General Index to the Colonial Records in 16 Volumes and to the Pennsylvania Archives in 12 Volumes* (Philadelphia: Joseph Severns & Co., 1860).

²⁸ Simon Edgell is not found among those passengers arriving in America. E.g., P. William Filby, ed., *Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, A Guide to Published Arrival Records of about 500,000 Passengers Who Came to the United States and Canada in the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries*, (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1981). Nor is there any record of when family members came over. His mother and wife, both named Rebecca, survive him. *Edgell Will*.

²⁹ E.g., Laughlin, *Pewter in America*, vol. 2, p. 39 ["at least as early as 1713"]; Herr, *Pewter in Pennsylvania German Churches*, p. 130 ["arrived in Philadelphia 1713 or earlier"], but neither states why.

³⁰ *Publications of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania*, vol. 2, no. 1 (June, 1900), pp. 67-68. As Myers cites this abstract, he must not have seen the original. Louis Guerineau Myers, *Some Notes on American Pewterers* (Garden City, NY: Country Life Press, 1926), p. 38. The current whereabouts of the original Mifflin marriage certificate are a mystery. It may have remained with the couple, as is the Quaker practice. For reasons unknown, no verbatim copy of it survives in the microfilm records of that Meeting, at the Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College. N. B.: Myers is otherwise unreliable as to Edgell genealogy. E.g., he has Simon's widow as "Mary," rather than Rebecca. *Id.*, pp. 38-39; *Edgell Will*.

³¹ *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of Philadelphia 1704 to 1776* (Philadelphia: Crissy & Markley, 1847), p. 141.

³² E.g., Montgomery, *A History of American Pewter*, p. 28 ["(w.1713-1742)"]; Fennimore, "Simon Edgell (c. 1688-1742)," in *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art*, p. 23 ("worked in the city from 1713 to 1742").

³³ *Minutes of the Common Council*, p. 130.

³⁴ All of my searches of Quaker meeting minute references to Simon Edgell were conducted in the microfilm records of the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting at Swarthmore and in the indices to records of various Somerset meetings in the vicinity of Camely, as survive at the Library at Friends House, Euston Road, London.

³⁵ Hannah died the 29th day of the 6th month 1719, John the 24th day of the 9th month 1724. William Wade Hinshaw, *Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy* (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1938) vol. 2, p. 357.

³⁶ Standard practice was for one meeting to certify the transit of one of its members to another. Edgell sought this permission from the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. On the 24th day of the 7th month 1731, the meeting recorded: "Application being made for a Certificate for Simon Edgle to Friends in Bristol he designing for said place in a short time, Anthony Morris and John Bringhurst are appointed to make the necessary Enquiry and prepare one again at next Meeting." Five days later, it was recorded that: "The Friends appointed to prepare a Certificate for Simon Edgle report he don't proceed his intended Voyage it is therefore dropt." Craig Horle et al., *Name Index to the Minutes of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting* (Philadelphia: Society of Friends, 1994), Swarthmore College Library Ref. BX7611 .P55B4 1994, in Minutes for March 1714/5-1744, on microfilm MR Ph 383, pp. 209-210. References to Simon Edgell, under a variety of spellings, during 1731-1735, appear in those minutes on the following pages: Edgel, Simon, 253-54; Edgle, Simon, 209-10, 253, 256-57, 259, 261; Egel, Simon 252.

³⁷ The site is now 139 Market Street. Hannah Benner Roach, "Benjamin Franklin Slept Here," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* ["*Pa. Magazine*"], vol. 84, pp.127, 139, citing Deed Book F-1, 162: Dec. 31, 1717. Cf., Laughlin cites 1718 for the date of Edgell's High Street house. Ledlie Irwin Laughlin, *Pewter in America*, vol. 2, p.155. Richard Hill (1667-1729), a wealthy merchant and prominent politician, owned, with his wife, at least 42 lots east of Delaware Third Street in Philadelphia, together with other substantial holdings. Craig W. Horle, Joseph S. Foster, and Jeffrey L. Scheib, eds., *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania, A Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 2 [1710-1756] (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), pp. 482-484.

³⁸ Per Kalm, *Travels into North America*, tr. By J.R. Foster (Warrington, 1770), vol. 1, pp. 33-34.

³⁹ Market days were Wednesday and Sunday. The country folk, who then brought in their victuals and

produce, could have visited Edgell's store for whatever pewter or other needs he could supply. Twice a year, in May and November, large-scale fairs were held. Unlike what Edgell may have been used to in London or Bristol (the nearest large city to Camely), sale by public outcry was uncommon in Philadelphia, except for oysters, perhaps because of their extreme perishability. Kalm, *Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 54, 172.

⁴⁰ Horle, *Lawmaking*, vol. 2, p. 379.

⁴¹ Hannah Benner Roach, "Benjamin Franklin Slept Here," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History & Biography* ["*Pa. Magazine*"], 84:127, 139-140, citing Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 66; J. A. Leo Lemay, *Benjamin Franklin: A Documentary History* (1997) [<http://www.english.udel.edu/lemay/franklin/1728.html>]. Franklin was there for approximately ten years, every now and again debiting Edgell's account for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenditures on the house. The last of these was: "[17]38 May 12 For Cash paid for mend[in]g Plast[er]in]g laying Hearth &c [£] -13-6." *Benjamin Franklin's Ledger A&B 1730-1740*, APS #B F85 f6 5, [p. 339] "[p.] 164 [account of] Simon Edgell D[ebto]r."

⁴² Perhaps for a time, Edgell retained a portion of the premises to live in, even after renting it to Franklin. In 1729, Edgell paid the Estate of Richard Hill eight pounds "for a years Ground rent where he lives." *HSP, Logan Papers*, Coll. 379, vol. 76, *Estate of Richard Hill Cash Books, 1729-1742*, Simon Edgell entry of October 30, 1729. In some capacity, Edgell appears back on Market by 1737, as he advertises that "Freight or Passage" on the "SHIP *Dragon*" for JAMAICA, may be agreed with its Master or "with Simon Edgel, in Market Street." *Pennsylvania Gazette* ["*PG*"], May 5, 1737.

⁴³ At about the time that Edgell first arrived in Philadelphia, Morgan Evan, a competitor, wrote "we commonly sell our Pewter at 1s 6p a pound or more...." "Notes & Queries," *Pa. Magazine*, vol. 42, p. 177, citing October 30, 1714 Morgan Evan letter.

⁴⁴ Franklin's lease was up in 1738. Roach, "Benjamin Franklin Slept Here," *Pa. Magazine*, vol. 84, pp. 127, 139-140, citing Franklin's *Autobiography*, p. 66; Lemay, *Benjamin Franklin: A Documentary History*. By 1741, Edgell is definitely back at his High Street location, as he advertises as "Simon Edgel in Market Street." *PG*, Nov 5, 1741. By this time, High Street's name had been changed to "Market Street" to more accurately reflect its function.

⁴⁵ After Penn returned to England, Logan was in charge of organizing the collection of the quitrents due the Proprietor. Appointed secretary to Penn in 1699, Logan became Clerk of the Provincial Council in 1701 and, thereafter, Secretary of the Province, Commissioner of Property, and Receiver General. No slacker when it came to responsibility, Logan also supervised transactions with the Indians, and was later a mayor of Philadelphia and a chief justice of the Province's Supreme Court. Horle, *Lawmaking*, vol. 1 (1682-1709), pp. 792-793.

⁴⁶ Edgell may have also had something to do with a transaction under the same date in Logan's ledger to "Thos. England's Estate" for "Pewter Dishes w[eighing] 9 lbs 26 ounces at 2s[hillings] per," at £0.18.9. Raymond V. Shepherd, Jr., *James Logan's Stenton: Grand Simplicity in Quaker Philadelphia*, M.A. Thesis, Winterthur (June, 1968), Appendix VII, citing a chronological list of household items found in *James Logan's Account Book 1712-1720* under "Household Goods." My thanks to Laura Stutman for directing me to Ray's thesis. It is a convenient reference to the Logan ledgers at *HSP*. I found in the Winterthur Library.

⁴⁷ *James Logan's Ledger 1720-1727* as "Acco[un]t of Household Goods," p. 89 left. "Limbeck" is archaic for "alembic," an "obsolete kind of still consisting of a gourd-shaped vessel or cucurbit, and a cap or alembic proper having a long beak for conveying the products to a receiver." *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), vol. 1, pp. 49, 1590.

⁴⁸ Logan's library, the only private Colonial library to have survived in tact, may hold clues to Logan's experiments with the alembic. His books are at the Library Company of Philadelphia.

⁴⁹ *HSP, Estate of Richard Hill Cash Books, 1729-1742*, Edgell entry, May 8, 1729.

⁵⁰ *HSP, Logan Papers*, "Account & Receipt for Executors of Estate of Richard Hill," vol. 18, p. 31

⁵¹ *HSP, Thomas Chalkley Account Book* for his ship *New Bristol Hope*, Chalkley Family Papers F-56, p. 36 left. My thanks to my good friend Beatrice Garvan, former Curator of American Decorative Arts at the Philadelphia Museum of Art for recalling this appearance of Edgell's name. (My research should only hold up half as well as hers!)

⁵² As will be later discussed, Edgell was soon to take on much export freight himself, but we do not know whether pewter was among it. His ports of call, like Chalkley's, were also to include the Caribbean.

⁵³ Harrold E. Gillingham, "Some Colonial Ships Built in Philadelphia," *Pa. Magazine*, vol. 56, p. 156, at p. 164.

⁵⁴ I discovered the Head Account Book, in May, 1999, among the *George Vaux Papers*, a voluminous archive at the Library of APS. Donated in 1992, by brothers George and Henry Vaux, the account book had been cherished as a family relic of a devout Quaker antecedent, but its larger significance had gone unappreciated. APS was founded by Franklin in emulation of The Royal Society. See generally, Stiefel, "Philadelphia Cabinetmaking" and "The Head Account Book As Artifact,"; Lita Solis-Cohen, "Account Book Becomes Rosetta Stone for Philadelphia Furniture," *Maine Antiques Digest* (April 2001) [<http://maineantiquedigest.com/articles/head0401.htm>], and "The Cabinetmaker's Account," *Masterpiece* (London: June 2001); Stiefel interview, BBC Radio Suffolk (June 20, 2001).

⁵⁵ The Head account book is a meticulously maintained daily chronicle of Philadelphia's commerce over a very early and extended period. It offers a 35-year "moving picture," not just a "snapshot," as do probate inventories, formerly the chief source of information about Head's and Edgell's period. As the earliest and most comprehensive account book to have survived from any 18th century American artisan, Head's account book is, arguably, the most important document in American decorative arts history. Cf., the 1708 probate inventory of Philadelphia joiner Charles Plumley, which had been hailed by the late Benno Foreman (1930-1982) as "one of the key documents of American furniture history." Benno Foreman, *American Seating 1630-1730, A Winterthur Book* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988), completed after Benno's untimely death by his students Robert Blair St. George and Robert F. Trent, pp. 47, 371-372, Appendix 1.

⁵⁶ Head opened Edgell's account on page 7, labelling it "Simond Hagal," to the left of which is written "Edgell." Page 7 records the first debit entries to the account with the opposing page, 8, devoted to credits. At the last debit entry on page 7, the account was then marked as "Car:ed [carried] to pag 86." As Head had by that time changed his numeration to one number for every two pages, page 86 [left] is labeled "Simond Edgal" and carries the debits to that account, whereas the opposing page, 86 [right] continues the credits. There is thus no doubt that all of these pages refer to entries for Simon Edgell's account. *Head Account Book* ["*Head*"], pp. 7, 86 left. Head's variants of Edgell's name are a product of Head's inconsistent phonetic spelling.

⁵⁷ Edgell bought the "Sader [cedar] Chest of drawers And Table," at £10-0-0, on 4/15/19. As they were ordered on the same date, they were probably matching. He also was debited by Head for "a mahogany Dask," at £8-10-0, on 6/25/20; "a mehoganey Chest of Drawers," at £7-15-0, on 5/9/25; and "a Chamber Table," at £2-5-0, on 6/30/29. The *en suite* cedar high chest and dressing table was only the second such pair to be debited by Head. The "pine Table" that Edgell ordered, on 6/16/32, at £0-13-0 1/2, appears incongruous among these more expensive woods, but may have been for a kitchen or Edgell's workshop. *Id.*, pp. 7, 86 left. A red cedar high chest of drawers from Head's shop survives in a private Delaware collection and may be the one ordered by Edgell. It is one of only three cedar chests of drawers recorded by Head and the only one extant. With arched stretchers between its turned legs, it is stylistically earlier than the walnut high chest, which Head debited to Caspar Wistar in 1726. *Id.*, p. 87 left [Wistar, 4/14/26]. The other possible candidate for first owner is Receiver General James Steele, to whom Head debited a cedar chest of drawers in 1724. *Id.*, p. 9 [Steele, 3/13/24]. The third cedar chest, made for Samuel Powel, Jr., and charged to Anthony Morris, would be stylistically too late to be the surviving chest. *Id.*, p. 87 left [Morris, 10/6/32]. All three chests of drawers were ordered with dressing tables. None of Head's cedar dressing tables survive. [All dates cited to the Head Account Book are to the Julian calendar with the first portion of "_/__" pertaining to the month, the second to the day, and the third to the last two digits of the 18th century year, *i.e.*, "17__." Thus, the "4/15/19" date above is to the 15th day of the 4th month (June) 1719.] Edgell owned no cedar furniture at the time of his death. *Edgell Probate Inventory*.

⁵⁸ *Head*, p. 8.

⁵⁹ *Id.*, p. 7. The "Sader [cedar] Coffin for his Child" that Head charged Edgell £0-15-0, on 6/29/19, appears to have been for his daughter Hannah, listed as dying that same date. The "Childs Coffin" costing £0-18-0, on 9/14/24, was apparently for a son, John, listed as dying ten days later. Hinshaw, *Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy*, vol. 2, p. 357. I could find no record of death for any Edgell child corresponding to the intervening "Childs Coffin," for which Head charged Edgell £0-7-0, on 11/3/22. Stiefel, "Philadelphia Cabinetmaking," sect. X.E.20, n. 717.

⁶⁰ *Head*, p. 50 left.

⁶¹ Surviving plates and dishes attributed to Edgell include two "single-reeded dishes of outstanding quality," and "smooth-brimmed plates," of which Edgell was the earliest known maker in America, according to Montgomery. "The eye delights in the rhythm and perfection of a well planished plate or dish with its concentric rows of hammer marks left by the hammermen of...Simon Edgell [and his colleagues]...." Montgomery, *A History of American Pewter*, pp. 28, 55, 116, 137.

⁶² *Head*, pp. 8, 86 right [Edgell credits], 85 left [Reeca debit].

⁶³ Other objects of pewter-form are mentioned in *Head*, but with no metal specifically described, and no reference to Edgell. *Head* debited Thomas Radman [Redman] £0-2-3, on 2/20/36, "To on Galon of melases [molasses] and a porringer." *Head*, p. 134 left. John Mafel was credited £0-4-10, "To a Tankerd Re[ceive]d of Solaman Crison [Solomon Cresson, the chairmaker]," with no date shown, but probably in 1720. *Id.*, p. 50 right.

⁶⁴ *Id.*, p. 8.

⁶⁵ See Don Herr's accompanying list.

⁶⁶ Dietrich American Foundation, Accession # 5.1.809, presently on loan to Waynesborough, Wayne, PA, the former home of Revolutionary War hero, General Anthony Wayne; provenance: Rose Olstead. My thanks to Richard Dietrich and the Foundation's curator, Deborah M. Rebeck, for their courtesies in providing photographs to me of the tankard and its "SE/bird" touch.

⁶⁷ The initials are said to stand for those of an early Philadelphian, Ann Michener. Winterthur accession no. 65.553, illustrated in Montgomery, *A History of American Pewter*, p. 115, fig. 6-16. Don Fennimore, on July 29, 2002, permitted me the courtesy of personally inspecting, under his supervision, Winterthur's two pieces of pewter with marks associated with Edgell, the 19" dish and the "AM" tankard. Don advised that, in past years, he had assigned graduate students to check the Michener provenance of the tankard, but they had come up empty-handed. A mark of "SE" above a bird is centered on the inside of the bottom of the tankard. The 19" dish bears several marks on its underside, including one "EDGELL" and another above with "Philadelphia" in script and an André Michel mark with a ship above. Don was, as ever, gracious in sharing his knowledge. Fennimore/Stiefel meeting, Winterthur, July 29, 2002.

⁶⁸ Sachervell's ad states that he has imported from London the "best white-metal Pewter Tea-Pots; likewise Tea-Stands, Cream Sauce-Pans, Tea-Spoons and other Curiosities; all of which are of the newest Fashion, and so very neat, as not easily to be distinguish'd from Silver, either by the Workmanship or Colour; and will be sold very Cheap, by Retale, at Mr. Stone's, next Door to Mr. Samuel Rar's in Front-Street." He describes himself as one "Who performs all sorts of Engraving or carving in Gold, Silver, Brass, Copper, or Steel, after the Newest and Neatest Manner." *PG*, March 15, 1722.

⁶⁹ Montgomery, *A History of American Pewter*, p. 201; *Edgell Probate Inventory*, first page

⁷⁰ *PG*, August 7, 1740, Hamilton and Coleman advertisement.

⁷¹ Furthermore, as with all of *Head*'s entries, there is a record of the actual price at the time of the transaction. It is not the belated valuation of a probate inventory.

⁷² *Head*, pp. 8, 86 right. *Head* also credited Edgell £0-6-2, on 5/12/25, "To : 4 : pound & 1/2 of Bees Wax," a product which *Head* may have been using for his finishes. *Id.*, p. 8.

⁷³ *Edgell Probate Inventory*, third, fourth and fifth pages.

⁷⁴ *Franklin's Ledger A&B 1730-1740*, Edgell Account, [p. 171] [p.] 3 "Contra." Franklin also took in a "Teapotte," as credit for five shillings due in another pewterer's account. *Id.*, [p. 66]: "[1735] Oct 21 Mr Byles Dr for Advt -5-/- paid a Teapotte."

⁷⁵ Franklin notes, as evidence of his frugality, that he used to eat his breakfast of Bread and Milk (no Tea) "out of a twopenny earthen Porringer with a Pewter Spoon,": until his wife without his knowledge replaced them with a "China Bowl with a Spoon of Silver" that had cost the "enormous Sum of three and twenty Shillings." Her only excuse was that "her husband deserv'd a Silver Spoon and China Bowl as well as any of his Neighbours." Franklin, *Autobiography*, p. 145.

⁷⁶ Laughlin gives only the first page of the Edgell inventory, that listing pewter. Laughlin, *Pewter in America*, vol. 2, p. 155, Appendix II. Also, please note that while Laughlin's transcription of that first page otherwise appears correct, certain entries are out of sequence.

⁷⁷ Byles sold from a location "three Doors below the Post Office." *PG*, October 3 and 31, 1745.

⁷⁸ *Id.*, March 13, 1750.

⁷⁹ *Id.*, August 18, 1737, April 26, 1739, May 21, 1741, June 25, 1741; *Edgell Probate Inventory*, third page. Edgell owned a quarter interest in the *Constantine*. *Id.*, fifth page.

⁸⁰ *Id.*, third and fifth pages. As will be later discussed, the portion of the latter entry which pertains to "Sundry Brass Mold" appears to relate to molds of brass (used in casting pewter) rather than for brass molding.

⁸¹ The runaway is described as being in a "pair of Breeches very black and greasy" and headed "towards New York." He had originally come over "from Bristol in the Brig. *Britannia*, John Bond, master." Edgell advertisement, *PG*, May 10, 1739.

⁸² The question of whether British pewterers and braziers practiced dual trades, possibly from as early as 1414, has been persuasively answered in the affirmative, by R.F. Homer and D.W. Hall. The practice was apparently so common that an *Act of Parliament in 1503*, lobbied for by the Pewterers Company, established that both pewter and brass had to comply to London alloy standards and that the Pewterers Company, or locally-appointed searchers, had the authority to search nationwide for both metals. R.F. Homer and D.W. Hall, *Provincial Pewterers* (London: Phillimore & Co., Ltd., 1985), p. 2; Ronald F. Homer, "Pewterers and Braziers – a Dual Trade?" *Journal of the Antique Metalware Society*, vol. 10 (June 2002), pp. 14, 19-21. Philadelphia pewterer Thomas Byles may have also been working as a brazier, as we see him twice offering to give the "highest Price in Cash, for any Quantity of Old...Copper or Brass...." *PG*, October 3, 1745, October 31, 1745.

⁸³ *Pa. Magazine*, vol. 72, p. 358, n. 57. Thomas Penn (1702-1775), a son of William Penn, served as a Proprietor of Pennsylvania, 1718-1775. Horle, *Lawmaking*, vol. 2, p. 1113.

⁸⁴ Benjamin Franklin, "The Interest of Great Britain With Regard to her Colonies" (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1760) pamphlet. [Emphasis in original.]

⁸⁵ Franklin was both a buyer and a seller of pewter. He advertised that he had "Just imported from London...fine Pewter Stands proper for Offices and Counting-houses." *PG*, May 20, 1742. Never one to miss an opportunity, Franklin offered, to those persons "who have old Pewter to dispose of," the sum of twelve and a half pence per pound, "for any Quantity, from One Pound, to a Thousand Weight, in Cash." *Id.*, September 26, 1745.

⁸⁶ Edgell rented his High Street house to Franklin. Edgell frequently advertised goods and services, for himself and his business associates, in Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette*. *Franklin's Ledger A&B 1730-1740*, [pp. 16, 24, 67, 170, 189, 339, 368]; *PG*, *passim*. Franklin supplied Edgell with legal forms for commercial and real estate transactions, e.g., penal bills, bonds and a bill of sale; and a letter book and account books, and even for binding a book for Edgell's associate, David Bush. *Id.*, [pp. 37, 42, 45, 46, 56, 170, 339].

⁸⁷ Franklin noted when Edgell's charges were past due. *Id.*, [pp. 189, 339]. When Edgell died, owing Franklin £75, Franklin would have been aware that he was only one of a long list of Edgell's creditors. *Edgell Probate Inventory*, seventh and eighth page. Franklin, with Miles Strickland and George Chubb, witnessed his Will. *Edgell Will*.

⁸⁸ *PG*, June 5, 1729.

⁸⁹ *Id.*, August 14, 1729.

⁹⁰ "Notes & Queries," *Pa. Magazine*, vol. 33, p. 121, citing household bills of James Steel, entry of April 30, 1730.

⁹¹ *Logan Ledger*, 1720-1727, HSP, p. 89 left. Stenton, Logan's home, contains much English pewter yet to be catalogued. Conversation with Laura Stutman, October 11, 2002.

⁹² J. B. Kerfoot, *American Pewter*, pp. 30-31.

⁹³ E.g., *Franklin's Ledger A&B 1730-1740*, Edgell Account and miscellaneous entries re Edgell; *Head*.

⁹⁴ See discussion below of Edgell and the importation of pewter.

⁹⁵ *PG*, June 4, 1730. Edgell paid Franklin for a half of a 1729 ad regarding an earlier runaway. *Franklin's Ledger A&B 1730-1740*, [p. 170] "[p.] 2 [account of] Simon Edgell Dr./1729 For 1/2 an Advt aft[er] the Servt run away wth Sheed's Man } £-2-6." This appears to be the earliest extant ad placed by Edgell for anything.

⁹⁶ *PG*, March 7, 1749.

⁹⁷ *Id.*, July 1, 1731. The name of attorney David Bush, with whom Edgell was to have much to do, is also first mentioned in this ad.

⁹⁸ E.g., people may apply to Edgell to be passengers or to have goods taken on board "The Bristol Merchant, bound for Bristol," *Id.*, July 1, 1731; "Freighters or Passengers" for the Brigantine Swallow, John Plasket, Master, bound for Bristol in ten days, are to "agree with Simon Edgel or David Bush, Merchants in Philadelphia," *Id.*, January 4, 1732. Similar ads appear for another Bristol-bound brigantine, the Mary, John Maynard, Master. Simon Edgell is described as "at William Fishbourns Wharff." *Id.*, October 11, 1733. On occasion, ships went elsewhere: "Freight or Passage" on the "SHIP Dragon" for JAMAICA, may be agreed with its Master or "with Simon Edgel, in Market Street." *Id.*, May 5, 1737.

⁹⁹ "Just Imported from Bristol In the Brigantine Seneca, JOHN JONES, Master, A Likely Parcel of SERVANTS, Men and Women; the Men mostly Husbandmen and Tradesmen: their Times to be disposed of by Simon Edgell." *Id.*, November 27, 1740.

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*, Sep 25, 1734 (“choice Parcel of Servants, whose Times are to be disposed of by Simon Edgell”); *id.*, September 11, 1735 (“A Parcel of likely servants just arrived from Milford; whose Times are to be disposed by said Simon Edgell”). By “Milford,” Edgell probably means Milford Haven, Wales, which is across the Bristol Channel from the port of Bristol. Edgell also brings over Palatines. *Id.*, June 15, 1738 (“Pfältzer”). Given Edgell’s close association with Palatines and his frequent advertisements in German, it is understandable why so much pewter attributed to him has survived in Pennsylvania German churches. See Herr’s checklist.

¹⁰¹ Edgell sought this permission from the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. On the 24th day of the 7th month 1731, the meeting recorded: “Application being made for a Certificate for Simon Edgle to Friends in Bristol he designing for said place in a short time, Anthony Morris and John Bringham are appointed to make the necessary Enquiry and prepare one again at next Meeting.” Five days later, it was recorded that: “The Friends appointed to prepare a Certificate for Simon Edgle report he don’t proceed his intended Voyage it is therefore dropt.” Horle, *Name Index to the Minutes of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting*, pp. 209-210.

¹⁰² The Cash Books of the Estate of Richard Hill for the years 1729-1742 record Edgell and, after his death, Rebecca Edgell, paying ground rent of £8 *per annum*. They describe Edgell as living at the property when he paid the rent on October 30, 1729. Starting in 1731, the rent was frequently noted as paid late. The payment of £16, on February 13, 1740/41, was recorded as for two years due. *HSP, Estate of Richard Hill Cash Books, 1729-1742*, miscellaneous entries regarding Simon and Rebecca Edgell, October 30, 1729-January 20, 1742/43.

¹⁰³ *PG*, September 2, 1731, Lee advertisement.

¹⁰⁴ *Id.*, Jan 4 1732.

¹⁰⁵ Richard Bowen has described Cox as a pewterer and merchant. He has credited Cox as “possibly another maker of very large dishes in Philadelphia,” comparing his work to the 19” dish twice marked Edgell, now at Winterthur. Richard L. Bowen, Jr., “William Cox, Another American Maker of Very Large Pewter Dishes,” *PCCA Bulletin* vol. 12, no. 7, p. 314. By the time that demands against his estate were being settled, Cox was described as the “Deceased William Cox, Merchant,” and as “of Philadelphia.” *PG*, March 7, 1749. Cf., Bowen, “William Cox,” p. 314, who has Cox dead by 1745.

¹⁰⁶ *PG*, July 17, 1732. Franklin debited Edgell’s account for Cox’s ads. *Benjamin Franklin, Ledger A&B 1730-1740*: [p. 28] “[1732] July 11 Simon Edgel Adv for Cox [?];” [1732] “July 20 For Advertisements for Cox -5-.” Cf., Bowen has Cox in Philadelphia, in 1720, buying a property on the river with merchant John Leach. Bowen, “William Cox,” p. 314, citing Laughlin, *Pewter in America*, vol. 2, p. 41.

¹⁰⁷ *HSP*, “November 23, 1733, deed to Simon Edgell from Thomas and Elizabeth Shute on a Philadelphia property,” 3rd Floor Deeds. *HSP*, “November 24, 1733 Simon Edgell Release from Thomas & Elizabeth Shute,” 3rd Floor Deeds. “Thomas Shut[e] sope b[o]jiler” had an account with John Head and sold him large quantities of soap. *Head*, p. 101 right [Shut].

¹⁰⁸ “To be Sold at William Fishbourn’s Wharf, Lisbon Salt by Simon Edgell.” *PG*, Feb 27, 1734. “All Sorts of Window GLASS to be sold by Simon Edgell.” *Id.*, May 2, 1734.

¹⁰⁹ *Id.*, September 11, 1735. We have no record of who was working for Edgell at his store. One unnamed servant of his died by drowning a few months prior, when a boat “overset” in a “violent Thunderstorm.” *Id.*, May 22, 1735; extracted in Leonard W. Labaree, ed., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), vol. 2, p. 133. “3 Negro Men” are listed in his inventory. *Edgell Probate Inventory*, fifth page. Perhaps, one or more of them, worked in the store or helped offload his goods from ships. The latter three are listed in the entry following Edgell’s interest in the *Constantine*.

¹¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹¹ Horle, *Lawmaking*, vol. 2, p. 379. The minutes give no hint as to the nature of their “difference.” Horle, “Name Index to the Minutes of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting,” pp. 252-254 (31 XI 1734, 28 XII 1734, 28 I 1735, 25 II 1735), 256 (30 III 1735), 257 (27 IV 1735), 259 (25 V 1735), 261 (29 VI 1735). A “Bill of Sale” that Edgell bought from Franklin, for four pence, on January 8, 1736, may have been used to memorialize the return of the Walnut Street property to Gatchell. *Franklin’s Ledger A&B 1730-1740*, [p. 339].

¹¹² “Freight or Passage” on the “SHIP *Dragon*” for JAMAICA, may be agreed with its Master or “with Simon Edgel, in Market Street.” *PG*, May 5, 1737; freight or passage on the Brigantine *Charming Betsy* for Barbadoes, is to be paid to “Simon Edgel”. *Id.*, November 5, 1741.

¹¹³ *Id.*, November 10, 1737. One wonders whether this was Edgell's old store? A list of the locations of pewterers' shops, prepared by my late friend Charles G. Dorman, *Curator Emeritus* of Independence Hall, shows no location for Neave's shop (who may not have been a pewterer) and an incorrect transcription ("opposite Fisherman's [rather than Fishbourne's or Fishbourn's] Wharf") for Edgell's location, after his move from High Street. Charles G. Dorman, "The Location of 19 Philadelphia Pewterer[s] Shops," [n.d.], kindly provided me by Don Herr.

¹¹⁴ *PG*, Dec 8 1737.

¹¹⁵ *Id.*, October 13, 1737.

¹¹⁶ Whether Edgell actually made it over to England on either of his intended trips, in 1735 or 1737, or any other for that matter, is not known. What is certain is that he died in Philadelphia, in 1742.

¹¹⁷ Some of these ads appear in both English and German. *Id.*, September 13, 1739, October 25, 1739, September 11, 1740, May 21, 1741, October 8, 1741.

¹¹⁸ *Id.*, May 21, 1741 and June 25 1741. Whether his importation of pewter was advantaged by his being a Yeoman of the Company is not known. Nothing beyond his freedom in 1709 is in its records. Perhaps someone will run across his name in the account books of London pewterers exporting to Philadelphia.

¹¹⁹ *PG*, September 7, 1738. The house is described as "between George Mifflin's and Wm. Paschal's." This may have been the George Mifflin whose marriage Edgell witnessed in 1713.

¹²⁰ It is described as bounded by Thomas Tatnall's piece and next to William Shipley's. *Id.*, May 17, 1739. This property was presumably bought by our Simon Edgell and not some other one. The only other Simon in the vicinity of Philadelphia at this time was the son of Cornelius, our Simon's brother. But that nephew Simon, in 1739, would have been too young. The nephew was left money, in our Simon's Will, to be "Laid out for Carpenters Tools when he shall be out of his apprenticeship." *Edgell Will*. It is the nephew who may be the Simon listed as dying on "7-7-1746" in the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. Hinshaw, *Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy*, vol. 2, p. 357.

¹²¹ "TO BE SOLD, A Tract of Wood Land, containing 200 Acres, scituate 16 Miles from the City of Philadelphia; ten Acres whereof may be made good Meadow; and watered by a constant Stream that runs through he said Land. Whoever has a mind to purchase the same, may apply to Simon Edgel in Market Street." *PG*, Nov 5, 1741.

¹²² *Edgell Probate Inventory*, seventh and eight pages.

¹²³ Advertisements for their partnerships appear in at least the following issues: *PG*, August 25, 1737, November 17, 1737 ["Edgell & Shippen"], June 15, 1738, August 17, 1738, September 13, 1739, October 25 1739, September 11, 1740, May 21, 1741, and October 8 1741 ["Shippen & Edgell"]. All of their advertisements are for freight or passage on the *Constantine*. On two occasions, Shippen was debited by Franklin for advertisements for the *Constantine*. June 15, 1738 and September 2, 1742. *Benjamin Franklin's Ledger D 1739-1748, APS # B F85f6 6*, account of "Mr Edward Shippen Dr," [p.] 145 [p. 322]. As the 1742 advertisement was after Edgell's death, Shippen presumably had retained his interest in the *Constantine*.

¹²⁴ Townsend Ward, "Germantown Road and Its Associations," *Pa. Magazine* 5:121, 131 (1881); "Reminiscences of Admiral Edward Shippen, Bordentown in the 1830's," *Pa. Magazine* 78:203 (1954).

¹²⁵ *Edgell Probate Inventory*, second, third, and fourth pages.

¹²⁶ *PG*, February 22, 1739.

¹²⁷ The Inventory of the Estate of "Edward Annelley," appraised by Tho. Hatton and Edward Roberts, and signed by Rebecca Edgell March 29, 1744, was filed April 2, 1744. The original is in the *Downs Collection*, Winterthur, Ephemera No. 57x8.1. "9 Pewter dishes, 28 Plates, 3 porringers, a funell & mustard pott," together appraised at £3, are shown. *Id.*, sixth page. What relation Annelly or his heirs had to "Annelly, Lewis and Vanderspiegel," which sold all manner of materials and "PEWTER" at the "Corner of Market Street, where formerly Charles Read lived," is not known by me. *PG*, January 29, 1741.

¹²⁸ Miranda had connections to another Philadelphia pewterer, Thomas Biles, as Miranda's daughter was left "my two houses in the City of Philadelp now rented to Mr. Biles." Isaac Miranda's Will, *Philadelphia Wills 1732-401*, Book E, p. 325; *Lancaster Wills*, Book 1, p. 6. Miranda, an apostate Jew, was a close acquaintance of Logan, to whom he sold Hebrew books. Like Edgell, he also shipped goods with Chalkley. Miranda prospered in the Indian trade and held political office, becoming a deputy judge of the province's Court of Vice-Admiralty. Edwin Wolf, 2nd and Maxwell Whiteman, *The History of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial Times to the Age of Jackson* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1957), pp. 18-20, 25, 42, 51, 77, 386; Craig Coberly, *Isaac Miranda/Meranda* [<http://www.pa-roots.com/~lancaster/biography/miranda.pdf>].

¹²⁹ In 1741, just prior to Edgell's death, Croghan had emigrated from Ireland - and immediately entered the Indian trade, becoming a speculator in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in the hinterlands to the west of Philadelphia. Nicholas B. Wainwright, "An Indian Trade Failure, The Story of the Hockley, Trent and Croghan Company, 1748-1752," *Pa. Magazine of History*, vol. 72, pp. 343, 345. Credit at liberal terms was available in Philadelphia for such trade. *Id.*, p. 358.

¹³⁰ *E.g.*, "294 Ells of Ozenbrigs," *Edgell Probate Inventory*, second page; *PG*, March 7, 1749, May 25, 179, October 26, 1749, March 13, 1750 [William Edgell ads].

¹³¹ *E.g.*, Laughlin states, that Edgell styled himself a "pewterer" as late as 1741, a year before his death. Laughlin, *Pewter in America*, vol. 2, p. 40.

¹³² *E.g.*, the 1733 deed and release for the Shute property. *HSP*, Shute/Edgell deed, November 23, 1733, and release, November 24, 1733.

¹³³ *PG*, May 10, 1739.

¹³⁴ While the term "pewter" appears frequently in Philadelphia, usually in advertisements of importation, my search for the term "pewterer" in all issues of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* during Edgell's period yielded only four other occurrences: Three were for advertisements mentioning Thomas Biles/Byles and the fourth was for a runaway "Irish Servant Man, named Robert Norry...[who] may pass for Pewterer and make Spoons," which was taken out by "James Macky, Merchant, in Front Street." *E.g.*, *id.*, March 12, 1741 [advertisement for "Sarah Griscom...living back of Thomas Byles, Pewterer, in Market Street"]; *id.*, May 7, 1741 [Macky advertisement]; *id.*, October 3, 1745, October 31, 1745 [Biles advertisements].

¹³⁵ Another artisan who never advertised his wares was Joiner John Head, who produced over 600 pieces of case furniture during his time in Philadelphia. Despite the quality of his casework, Head's decisions not to advertise or to mark his work are two reasons why his prominence went unrecognized until his account book was examined.

¹³⁶ *E.g.*, *id.*, June 4, 1730 [Edgell offers rewards for four run away sailors from ship *Salisbury*, Daniel Williams, Master]; *id.*, January 4, 1732 ["The Brigantine *Swallow*, John Plasket, Master," to sail for Bristol in 10 days - "Freighters or Passengers may agree with Simon Edgel or David Bush, Merchants in Philadelphia"]; *id.*, July 17, 1732 [reward for Stephen Parstow, an "English...Blacksmith," a run away servant of William Cox of Brunswick to be paid by Cox, or "Simon Edgel in Philadelphia"].

¹³⁷ *Edgell Probate Inventory*, first and fifth pages.

¹³⁸ Edgell's competitor, pewterer Thomas Biles, was to advertise the sale of pewter at wholesale and retail. Edgell's *PG*, October 3, 1745, October 31, 1745.

¹³⁹ *Id.*, May 21, 1741, June 25, 1741 (ads for ship *Constantine* importing pewter for sale in John Pole's store).

¹⁴⁰ Montgomery, *A History of American Pewter*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁴¹ *Head*, pp. 8, 86 right [Edgell credits], 85 left [Reeca debit].

¹⁴² *PG*, Jan 4 1732. *See also, e.g.*, where Edgell is identified as a "Kauffmann," *i.e.*, merchant, in a 1738 German language advertisement in Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette*, addressed to Palatines arriving from Amsterdam aboard the ship *Townsend*. If their passage was not yet paid for, they are directed, under penalty of law, to pay Edgell therefore. *PG*, no. 496, June 15, 1738; extracted in Labaree, *Papers of Franklin*, vol. 2, p. 212:

Alle diejenigen Pfälzter, die mit dem Capitain Thomas Thomson in dem Schiff genandt Townsend, übergekomen sind von Amsterdam, und weder ihre Fracht bezahlet haben, werden hierbey aufgefordert die Bezahlung eiligst zu entrichten by Simon Edgell, Kauffmann, in Philadelphia; Oder aber erwarten dass man sie nach denen Rechten dieser Provinz verfolgen muss. Ein jeder hüte sich für schaden.

¹⁴³ *Philadelphia Wills 1742-269*.

¹⁴⁴ *E.g.*, John Head, despite expanding his business into textiles, building materials, and other goods, still styled himself a "Joyner" in his Will. *Philadelphia Wills 1754-136*. It was common in the period for individuals, especially Quakers, to style themselves as artisans and yet be large holders of real estate and "men of substance." Frederick B. Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House: the Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia 1682-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), p. 116. Quakers, in particular, appeared to be attracted to the "sober values of the aspiring tradesmen." Thomas M. Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit: Mercantils and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986), p. 61. Benjamin Franklin, an artisan himself, found Philadelphia's "Mechanics" to be esteemed by their fellow citizens because of the usefulness of their employment:

The People have a saying, that God Almighty is himself a Mechanic, the greatest in the Universe, and he is respected and admired more for the Variety, Ingenuity, and Utility of his handiworks, than from Antiquity of his Family. John L. Cotter, Daniel G. Roberts and Michael Parrington, *The Buried Past: An Archaeological History of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 40.

¹⁴⁵ *Edgell Probate Inventory*, sixth and seventh pages. Bush was also an attorney. In an ad taken out by Edgell, those indebted to a William Champion were warned to settle their accounts or “expect Trouble from his Attornies, Simon and David Bush.” *PG*, July 1, 1731.

¹⁴⁶ Laughlin, *Pewter in America*, vol. 2, p. 40; *Edgell Probate Inventory*, sixth and seventh pages. Among Edgell’s remaining real estate may have been some across the Delaware River, in New Jersey. In 1745, his widow, Rebecca, advertised eight acres of upland and meadow in Salem, which had a frame house, kitchen, and tanyard. *PG*, June 27 1745. His Will gives no specific descriptions of his property, other than bequeathing, generally, his “Estate Reall and Personall.” *Edgell Will*.

¹⁴⁷ *PG*, March 5, 1741. Bush’s business extended to the importation of those capable of fabricating base metal. Bush advertised as “Just Imported from Corke, In the *Snow Ann and Mary*, Samuel Hodson, Master,” servants including “smiths.” *Id.*, May 21, 1741. Bush had his own wharf in Wilmington, known as “Bush’s Wharf.” *Id.*, Oct 29 1741. Bush’s sales of imported pewter in Wilmington may explain, or merely be coincidental to, Edgell’s 1739 purchase of the property in New Castle, a little down the Delaware River from Wilmington, at what appears to be a commercial location: Market Street. *Id.*, May 17, 1739. Perhaps both were selling pewter in Delaware, or otherwise planning a continuance of their commerce together.

¹⁴⁸ Imported pewter from England continued to flood Philadelphia. Perhaps the most extensive description of the types of pewter being brought in at this time is in the May 1741 advertisement of John Hyatt, who was selling in Front Street:

...London pewter of several sorts, as dishes, plates, porringers, tankards, mugs, basons, spoons, dram bottles, and sucking bottles, candle moulds, wine measures, of all sizes, tea pots and spoons of the newest fashion.... *Id.*, May 14, 1741.

¹⁴⁹ *Id.*, May 20, 1742.

¹⁵⁰ *Id.*, August 16, 1744.

¹⁵¹ Laughlin, *Pewter in America*, vol. 2, p. 40.

¹⁵² Edgell’s interest was appraised at £200. *Edgell Probate Inventory*, fifth page.

¹⁵³ *Id.*, May 21, 1741 and June 25 1741.

¹⁵⁴ Edgell did advertise the sale of other imported goods, e.g., “Irish Linnens.” *Id.*, September 11, 1735. But there were huge quantities of imported goods in his probate inventory, e.g., “Sundrys Goods as per Invoice by Ship Constamtime £720,” that never made it into the public press. *Edgell Probate Inventory*, fifth page.

¹⁵⁵ *Id.*, fifth page.

¹⁵⁶ *Id.*, first and sixth pages.

¹⁵⁷ *Id.*, fifth page.

¹⁵⁸ *PG*, Aug 25 1743.

¹⁵⁹ *Id.*, November 1, 1744.

¹⁶⁰ Another pewterer and shopkeeper with a large stock of pewter in his probate inventory was John Leacock (1689-1752), father to goldsmith John Leacock. *Philadelphia Wills*, Book F, p. 51, no. 469.

¹⁶¹ *Edgell Probate Inventory*, first and sixth pages. My count of pewter articles in Edgell’s stock at the time of his death thus greatly exceeds that given by Montgomery, who counted only “8,001 pieces of pewter.” Montgomery, *A History of American Pewter*, pp. 116, 139.

¹⁶² *Edgell Probate Inventory*, sixth page. One of these mahogany pairs may have come from Head: the 1720 mahogany chest of drawers and the 1725 chamber table of unspecified wood, which may have been made to match it. *Head*, pp. 7, 86 left. The Edgell inventory gives no indication of whether the two pairs in his inventory were made to be used *en suite*. If they were, the four pieces would be exceedingly rare. I know of only the two pairs of matching high chests and dressing tables, the walnut ones which belonged to Philadelphia merchant Levi Hollingsworth, and are attributed to Thomas Affleck. Both are extant. One pair sold in 1998. Christie’s, *Important Philadelphia Chippendale Furniture from The Hollingsworth Family*, auction catalogue (New York, January 16, 1998), sale 8882, lot 501. The other pair is at The Philadelphia Museum of Art. Edgell’s mahogany pairs, if matching, would be even scarcer.

¹⁶³ Laughlin commented on the reliance of colonial pewterers on second-hand pewter, given the restrictions and expense of importing it from the tin deposits in Wales, which supplied the western world. He went on to note: "The complete absence of tin in every colonial pewterer's inventory that I have examined, and I have seen a good many, is proof of the effectiveness of Great Britain's attempts to shut off the export of raw tin to America." Laughlin, *Pewter in America*, vol. 1, p.6. While no raw tin was listed in Edgell's probate inventory, substantial quantities of both "Tinn" and "Brass" appear in that of Philadelphia clockmaker Peter Stretch (d. 1746). *Philadelphia Wills 1746-108*.

¹⁶⁴ Pass/Stiefel e-mail, October 9, 2002.

¹⁶⁵ *PG*, September 26, 1745 (Franklin ad).

¹⁶⁶ *Contra*, "At the time of his death in 1742, Simon Edgell, a Philadelphia pewterer, had 1,183 pounds of brass molds, some of which he had used to make the 1,968 tablespoons, 1,296 teaspoons, and 4 soup spoons remaining in his shop." Donald L. Fennimore, *Metalwork in Early America: Copper and Its Alloys from the Winterthur Collection* (Winterthur, Del.: Winterthur, 1996), p. 373, citing, at n. 159, Laughlin's transcription of Edgell's inventory. Don has since advised me that his sentence appears to be "mis-transcribed from another pewterer's inventory," as neither of us could find any reference to any quantity of brass molds or their purpose expressed in Edgell's original probate records or in Laughlin's transcription. Fennimore/Stiefel e-mail, July 26, 2002. While the record with regard to Edgell had to be corrected, Don's oversight is inconsequential given the monumentality of his contributions to metalware scholarship. I'm having enough trouble keeping things straight just for one pewterer, let alone a legion of metalworkers! I hope my own errors, which I expect to be many, will not detract from our understanding of Edgell..

¹⁶⁷ *Cf.*, John Head charged Peter Stretch only five shillings, on 10/18/39, for "Three round peeses to Cast By," and that charge included "mending a pine Table." *Head*, p. 132 left [Stretch]. While Head doesn't disclose in what wood he had made those "peeses," he may have used some left from the "33 foot of Goom [gumwood] Bord" that he had bought from Daniel Hillman, on 4/5/26, at £0-2-9. As recorded by Per Kalm, the Swedish naturalist in his Philadelphia journal soon after the deaths of Edgell and Stretch, molds were cast there from "*Liquidambar Styraciflua* or *Sweet Gum-tree*." Philadelphian Lewis Evans had told Kalm, "from his own experience, that no wood in this country was more fit for making moulds for casting brass in than this." Per Kalm, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 162. Garland Pass advises that the methodology of using wooden molds filled with sand to cast brass is discussed and well illustrated in Peter, Nancy, and Herbert Schiffer, *The Brass Book* (Exton, Pa.: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1978). Pass/Stiefel e-mail, September 12, 2002.

¹⁶⁸ Kerfoot, *American Pewter*, p. 31.

¹⁶⁹ *PG*, May 18, 1749.

¹⁷⁰ *Id.*, August 24, 1749.

¹⁷¹ *E.g.*, in discussing plates with hot-water reservoirs, Montgomery cites the listing of a "Large Water Plate" in the pewter section of Edgell's inventory as part of the "ample record of their American manufacture." Montgomery, *A History of American Pewter*, p. 139.

¹⁷² Hayward/Stiefel e-mail; May 30, 2002.

¹⁷³ Herr/Stiefel e-mail, May 27, 2002.

¹⁷⁴ Allentown Art Museum, *Early American Pewter, John J. Evans, Jr. Collection*, exhibition catalogue (Allentown, PA, January 7,- March 14, 1966), p. 3: "we have evidence that pewterers exchanged molds or sold them outright to others in the trade...."

¹⁷⁵ *Edgell Probate Inventory*, first page.

¹⁷⁶ Laughlin, *Pewter in America*, vol. 3, p. 9, wherein Laughlin states that there are "two impressions" of the Michel touch. In my examination with Don Fennimore, I noticed only one. Laughlin also describes the dish as "hammered all over," whereas it is only hammered on the bouge. *Id.*

¹⁷⁷ *PG*, April 24, 1746.

Checklist of Extant Simon Edgell Pewter

By Donald M. Herr

1. Beaker, H $4\frac{3}{8}$ ", TD $3\frac{1}{2}$ ", BD $3\frac{1}{4}$ ", mark L526 on inside bottom. *Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Donald M. Herr*. Illustrated in Donald M. Herr, *Pewter in Pennsylvania German Churches*, p. 60, fig. 94, as formerly in the Bowmansville Mennonite Church, Bowmansville, Lancaster County, PA.
2. Beaker, H $4\frac{3}{8}$ ", TD $3\frac{5}{8}$ ", BD $3\frac{1}{4}$ ", unmarked but from the same mold as the beaker in item 1. *Collection of Deep Run Mennonite Church East*, Bucks County, PA. Listed in Herr, p. 157.
3. Dish, D 19", hammered on bouge only, marks L528a and 529a on back and partial mark L528a on front brim. Also bearing a mark of André Michel on back. *Collection of Winterthur Museum (#53.28)*. Marks only illustrated in Laughlin, *Pewter in America*, vol. III, Plate CVII, figs. 528a, 529a. Dish illustrated in Jay Robert Stiefel, *Simon Edgell (1687-1742)—"To A Puter Dish" and Grander Transactions of a London-trained Pewterer in Philadelphia*," *Pewter Collectors' Club of America, Bulletin*, vol.12, no. 8, p. 375.
4. Dish, D $16\frac{1}{16}$ ", hammered all over, marks L527 and 528 on back. *Collection of Yale University Art Gallery (#1931.273)*. Illustrated in Louis G. Myers, *Some Notes on American Pewterers*, p. 36; Graham Hood, *American Pewter*, fig. 185.
5. Dish, D 15", hammered all over, marks L527 and 528 on back. Also on back, the letter "T" struck three times. *Collection of Metropolitan Museum of Art (#43.162.25)*, gift of Joseph France, 1943. Illustrated in Laughlin, vol. I, frontispiece; Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Bulletin*, vol. 12, no. 7, p.214.
6. Deep Dish, D $13\frac{1}{4}$ ", unhammered, mark L526 struck twice on back. *Herr Collection*.
7. Plate, D $8\frac{1}{2}$ ", unhammered, mark L526 struck twice on back. *Collection of Trinity Lutheran Church*, New Holland, Lancaster County, PA. Listed in Herr p. 167.
8. Plate, D $8\frac{7}{8}$ ", unhammered, mark L526 struck twice on back. *Private collection*.
9. Plate, D $9\frac{1}{4}$ ", smooth brimmed, hammered on bouge, marks L527, 528 & 529 on back. Marks only illustrated in Laughlin, vol. II, Plate LXV. Ex-Laughlin collection but present whereabouts is unknown.
10. Pint Tankard with double domed lid, H $5\frac{7}{8}$ ", TD $3\frac{3}{8}$ ", BD $3\frac{7}{8}$ ", mark L526 on inside bottom. *Collection of Christ Little Tulpehocken United Church of Christ*, Berks County, PA. Illustrated in Herr, p. 116, figs. 238, 239 (mark), and described as "likely the earliest known pint tankard made by an American pewterer."
11. Quart Tankard with double domed lid, H $6\frac{1}{2}$ ", TD $4\frac{3}{8}$ ", BD $4\frac{3}{4}$ ", mark L526 on inside bottom. *Collection of St. John (Hain's) United Church of Christ*, Berks County, PA. Illustrated in Herr, p. 115, fig. 237.

12. Quart Tankard with double-domed lid, H $6\frac{9}{16}$ "", TD $4\frac{3}{8}$ "", BD $4\frac{3}{4}$ "", mark L526 on inside bottom. Body engraved with floral decoration and initials, "A M". *Collection of Winterthur Museum (#65.553)*. Illustrated in Montgomery, *A History of American Pewter*, p. 115, fig. 6-16; Laughlin, vol. I, Plate XVI, fig. 94 and described as "Perhaps earliest of all surviving American tankards. Both thumb-piece and handle terminal are early variants of standard forms."
13. Quart Tankard with double-domed lid, H 7"", TD $4\frac{7}{16}$ "", BD 5"", mark L526 on inside bottom. *Collection of The Dietrich American Foundation (5.1.809)*; ex-collection of Edward E. Minor; Rose Olstead. Illustrated in Laughlin, vol. I, Plate XVI, fig. 95, and described as, "Except for a very heavy base this tankard is later in design than many American tankards made after 1770. It was undoubtedly the 'newest thing' in tankards in Edgell's day."
14. Quart Tankard with double-domed lid, H $6\frac{1}{2}$ "", TD $4\frac{1}{2}$ "", BD $4\frac{7}{8}$ "", unmarked but from the same mold as the tankards in Items 11 and 12. *Collection of Zion St. John's (Reed's) Lutheran Church, Berks County, PA*. Listed in Herr, p. 157.
15. Hot Water Plate, dimensions unknown. Listed in Carl Jacobs, *Guide to American Pewter*, p. 88. The whereabouts of this plate, if it exists, is unknown.

Editor's Note: It has been the custom in The Bulletin for some time that when an article containing new information on an early American pewterer is published, an up to date checklist of the extant pewter of that pewterer is also published. Who better to compile such a list on Simon Edgell than Don Herr who owns two of the pieces and has illustrated or listed five others in his book, "Pewter in Pennsylvania German Churches."

Whenever lists or illustrations are published in The Bulletin, the inclusion of dimensions is always encouraged to make it easier to identify and compare similar pieces. Collectors should be aware, however, that dimensions can vary depending upon who is taking the dimension and how. For instance, is the height of a tankard the perpendicular height or the slant height; is it to the top of the rim, the top of the dome, or the top of the thumbpiece, and has the thumbpiece been bent? The finishing operation by the pewterer can also have an effect: while skimming the body of a mug or tankard on a lathe, the removal of $\frac{1}{32}$ " of material will decrease the diameter of the piece by $\frac{1}{16}$ "; the removal of $\frac{1}{16}$ " will decrease the diameter by $\frac{1}{8}$ ". And the taking of dimensions can be subjective as well. In an upcoming article, it was found that the diameter of simple plates, either listed in museum catalogs or accession cards, sometimes varied by $\frac{1}{8}$ " or more from dimensions taken by the researcher. In attempting to verify the dimensions of one piece on the above list, an even greater variation was reported at one point. Note that the dimensions listed for Item 13 on the above list were checked specifically for this list, yet each of the dimensions vary by $\frac{1}{8}$ " from those listed in Laughlin for the same tankard. Also the tankards listed in Items 11, 12, and 14 all were cast in the same mold but their listed dimensions vary as much as $\frac{1}{8}$ ". For the record, the height of the tankards in the above list is the overall height to the top of the thumb-piece.

The point of this discussion is that listed dimensions of any piece should never be considered immutable. If a comparison of two pieces is being made, there is no substitute for a side by side comparison; listed dimensions and photographs can provide a starting point but will never provide conclusive evidence.

Editor's Note: Dr. Sterling F. Delano is a professor of English at Villanova University. He has been researching the Brook Farm community in Massachusetts and has written a book on the subject which will be published in the near future by Harvard University. A member of that community was Ephraim Capen, whom we know as the lamp maker in partnership with George Molineux in New York City. When Dr. Delano contacted Don Fennimore regarding a Brook Farm lamp at Winterthur, Don suggested that I might be interested in an article for "The Bulletin" on Capen's association with Brook Farm. I was, and here is Dr. Delano's article.

"Ephraim Capen: Brook Farm Pewterer"

Sterling F. Delano

Four years before he teamed up with George Molineux in 1848 to become "one of the more prolific, if not the most prolific makers of all Nineteenth Century American fluid lamps," Ephraim Capen spent nearly two years at Brook Farm in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, in charge of the Association's Britannia Ware industry.¹ Brook Farm (1841-1847), of course, is America's most renowned utopian community—no doubt in part because of the association with it of such prominent antebellum figures as Nathaniel Hawthorne, an original shareholder, Ralph Waldo Emerson, a frequent visitor, Horace Greeley, a financial supporter and the powerful editor of the New York Tribune, and dozens of other "movers and shakers" who helped to make the decade 1840 one of the most intense periods of reform fervor in American history. Halfway through Brook Farm's existence its leaders decided to embrace the industrial principles of French social-scientist Charles Fourier, principles that were then inspiring the organization of no fewer than twenty-five Fourierist communities across the United States between 1842 and 1849.² Brook Farm's conversion in January 1844 from a "Transcendental picnic," as one cynic referred to the community, to a Fourierist Phalanx (Fourier's term for the ideal community) prompted dozens of skilled and semi-skilled workers to make their way to West Roxbury. In the six months between January - July 1844, for instance, eighty-seven applicants were admitted to the community. Ephraim Capen was one of them.

We certainly know much less about Capen than we do about the popular Brook Farm community, but there is new information that helps to document Capen's activities immediately before the organization of the successful New York City based firm that was known as 'Capen and Molineux' (1848-1854).³ Capen formally became a member of the Brook Farm community on 6 May 1844. Since it was customary for applicants to serve a two month probationary period, he probably first settled there in March. He was undoubtedly already familiar with the community, not only because he lived in nearby Dorchester, but also because he married a Roxbury woman named Mary T. Lucas on 4 May 1842. She must have died shortly afterward, however, because Capen was alone when he arrived at Brook Farm. Her death may have been what prompted him to seek companionship in the community. (Capen remarried in August 1849.) When he signed the Brook Farm Constitution on 12 May 1844—as was customary—he listed his date of birth as 6 March 1813, and his occupation as 'Pewterer,' the only person ever to so designate himself on that document.

Before deciding to become a pewterer, Capen first intended to be a Congregationalist minister. One Brook Farm commentator notes that he “was educated for the ministry, but [he] lacked sufficient orthodoxy to preach dutifully the doctrine of eternal punishment.”⁴ At Brook Farm, Capen was affectionately known as “The Parson.” He lived in the attic over one of the wings of the community’s main building with four other single men. He was found of reading in bed (invariably falling asleep over his book), and, like so many of the Brook Farmers, he enjoyed a good pun. John Thomas Codman, one of the men with whom he shared the attic, later recalled that during one of the financially troubled community’s retrenchment programs, Capen held up a pair of trousers that had just been repaired and announced to those within earshot that “I have just gotten a *reseat in full* for these pantaloons.”⁵ In November 1845 Brook Farm was wracked by a smallpox epidemic that ultimately contributed to the community’s collapse in 1847. Capen must have exhibited signs of the disease because he was one of about thirty-five Brook Farmers who were eventually quarantined in a small building on the western side of the 200 acre farm. The community survived the epidemic, but Capen left West Roxbury not long after the epidemic—probably in December 1845 or January 1846.

The manufacture of Britannia Ware was one of three primary “industries” at Brook Farm after the community’s conversion to Fourierism. (The other two were shoemaking and the construction of blinds, sashes, and windows.) Brook Farm was hardly equipped for wide scale manufacturing endeavors, so Capen single-handedly oversaw the production of pewter whale oil lamps and teapots in a 60’ x 28’ shop that he shared with the community’s shoemakers and, later, the printers of a Fourierist weekly paper called *The Harbinger*.⁶ Most likely Capen was producing lamps and teapots at the farm in the months right before and immediately after he formally joined the Association in May 1844, but the only surviving financial records do not begin until 1 November 1844, so information about his “industrial” labors in the community is limited mostly to the period after that date. However, there are surviving ‘Brook Farm Labor Records’ for the one-year period from May 1844 to April 1845, and they indicate that Capen logged nearly all his hours during this one-year period in the “Mechanical Series,” under which the manufacture of Britannia Ware would have been one of the enterprises.⁷ The financial records, in any case, show very clearly that the production of Britannia Ware was one of the main industries at Brook Farm in 1845, although Capen seems to have concentrated more on pewter whale oil lamps than on teapots. There is an occasional reference or two to the latter in the financial records, but there are a great many more to whale oil lamps. There were few variations in the design of these lamps. They were intended to be functional rather than decorative. Some were manufactured with a “dish” or saucer-like base (see photo, p. 393); others were produced with a simple base. There was slight variation in the length of the shaft. Most of the Brook Farm lamps seem to have had an “acorn” shaped font to hold the oil, and each was stamped with a simple “Brook Farm” marking underneath the base.⁸

Brook Farm’s financial records for the fiscal year 1 November 1844 - 31 October 1845 have never been carefully examined before. They indicate that income from the production of Britannia Ware was approximately \$387.43 for the one year period. Expenses totaled approximately \$529.97, but those expenses not only include the cost of materials such as block tin, lamp screws, and burner tubes, but several indirect costs as well. Capen’s shop was charged, for example, more than seven dollars in March 1845 for the

“use of horse & power.” Once the community’s new steam engine became fully operational by the end of the year, his shop was debited nearly thirty dollars in October 1845 for the use of power. Income and expenses may also have been skewed by other factors as well. To settle an outstanding bill with Boston crockeryware merchant John Collamore, Jr., in April 1845, for example, the Brook Farmers bartered with him and provided his shop on Washington Street with more than forty pairs of lamps. At roughly seventy-five cents a pair, the lamps would have brought in thirty dollars of income. Unfortunately for the Association, the sale of Britannia-Ware lamps and tea-pots, as Brook Farmer John T. Codman later noted, was “limited, the market being dull or glutted.” In light of Capen’s subsequent success in New York City just a few years later, however, it seems more likely that it was less a “dull or glutted” Boston market and much more Brook Farm’s internal problems that really accounts for Capen’s difficulties manufacturing Britannia Ware at the West Roxbury community. Ironically enough, today, a pair of Brook Farm whale oil lamps in good condition might cost as much as \$1,500—not because of their intrinsic worth, but simply because they were manufactured at America’s most celebrated utopian community in such relatively limited numbers.



Saucer base whale oil lamp attributed to Ephraim Capen while he was at Brook Farm. Overall height = 7.25"; Base diameter = 5.060". Inset photo of "Brook Farm" mark on the underside of the base. *Photographs courtesy of Winterthur Museum.*

Endnotes:

¹ Melvyn D. Wolf, "Marked Nineteenth Century American Pewter Fluid Lamps," *PCCA Bulletin*, Vol. 8, No. 9, p. 305.

² For a complete list of these Fourierist communities, see Otohiko Okugawa, "APPENDIX A: Annotated list of communal and utopian societies, 1787-1919," in Robert Fogarty, *Dictionary of American Communal and Utopian History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 183-196.

³ In *Pewter in America: Its Makers and Their Marks* (Bane, MA: Bane Publishers, 1969), Ledie I. Laughlin cites the mark 'E-CAPEN' and notes that "just before or just after the duration of [the Capen and Molineux partnership]," Capen "must have manufactured britannia ware in a shop of his own" (99). If it was the period before his association with Molineux, then it would had to have been either 1843 or earlier, or 1846 and/or 1847. J.B. Kerfoot, in *American Pewter* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1924), puts the date of Capen's association with George Molineux as "1848 to 1853" (156). Other commentators routinely cite 1854 rather than 1853.

⁴ Lindsay Swift, *Brook Farm: Its Members, Scholars, and Visitors* (New York: Macmillan, 1900), 121.

⁵ *Historic and Personal Memoirs* (Boston: Arena, 1894), 131.

⁶ Capen may have received occasional assistance from George W. Pierce, a mechanic who became a member of the Association three-and-a-half months after Capen did. Their names sometimes appear together in the financial records.

⁷ Both the surviving financial records and the 'Brook Farm Labor Record - May 1844-April 1845' are in the 'Brook Farm Papers' of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

⁸ The Dish Lamp featured in plate X is from the Winterthur Museum collection in Winterthur, Delaware. Two other Brook Farm lamps are among the holdings of the Museum at Historic Deerfield. The height of the lamp at Winterthur is $7\frac{1}{4}$." The lamps at Deerfield are $6\frac{1}{2}$ " high. A pair of Brook Farm lamps—one of them a Dish Lamp $6\frac{3}{4}$ " high, the other with regular base $7\frac{1}{16}$ " high—are featured in *Pewter in America 1650-1900* [Catalogue], "The Currier Gallery of Art" (Manchester, New Hampshire, October 6-November 3, 1968): 57.

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The Editor

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