

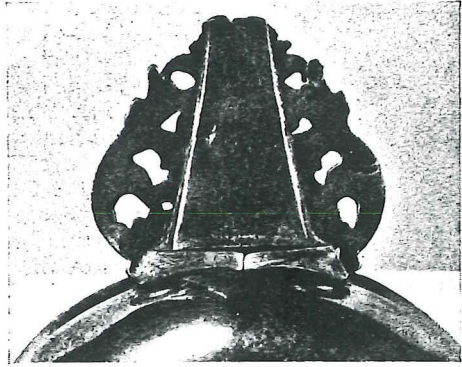
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## Crown-Handled Porringers

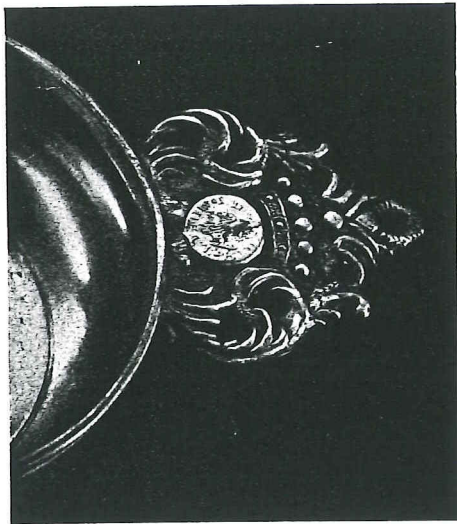
By Percy E. Raymond

Secretary, Pewter Collectors Club of America



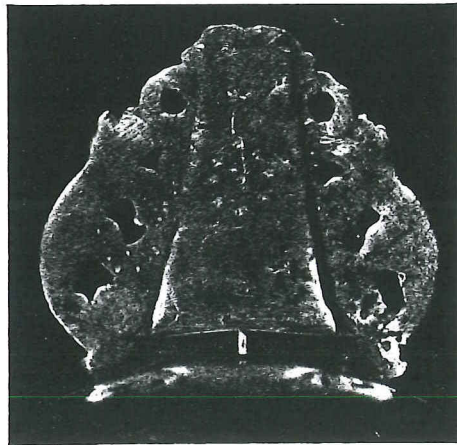
—Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, Conn.

1. The back of the unique Joseph Belcher porringer, the front of which was figured by Charles Calder. The tip is broken away.



—Ledlie I. Laughlin

2. A Josiah Danforth porringer, the first one ever shown in illustration.



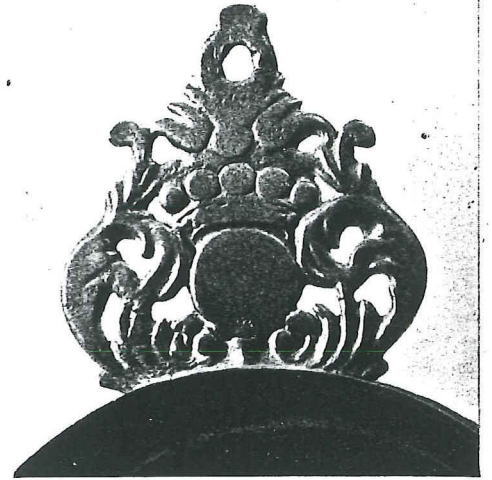
—Douglas Curry

3. Back of the handle of an unmarked specimen. Note circle of punched stars on the reinforcement.

PEWTERERS are commonly accused of having been copy-cats, following where silversmiths led. But once in a while a pewterer had an idea of his own. One innovation seems to have produced crown-handled porringers, which, so far as I know, were never made in silver. Who originated them is unknown. Probably someone down Bristol way in England, for no specimen has been found with the touch of a London maker. Naturally the great men of the craft would not copy anything made in the "provinces," and it is equally unlikely that a silversmith would stoop so low as to accept a design popular in the vulgar metal.

As will be seen by the illustrations, these porringers are not unattractive, but they have suffered somewhat as collectibles from the fact that a few of them were at one time exceedingly common. On the other hand, some of them are exceedingly rare; in fact, at least three, the ones made by Belcher, David Melville, and W. B., are unique.

The common ones are a part of the "initialed" group of Kerfoot. These are the I G, S G (with the S reversed), and W N (incorrectly read by Kerfoot W W). On all these the initials stand out in relief on the back of the handle, the letters being cut in the mold. These initials have not been identified. Such porringers turn up most frequently in the Boston area, hence the G's have been attributed to the Greens and to Gleason. What little circumstantial evidence there is points to the latter rather than to the former, particularly as one or two specimens have been found with the initials



—Collection of the Author

4. English-New York type. Porringer by Stephen Cox. Note the flattened bosses.

R G. But I am convinced that Roswell Gleason was too honest a pewterer (though he did make britannia and finally sank to the level of electroplated silver) to allow such sloppy pieces as the I G and R G to be uttered from his shop.

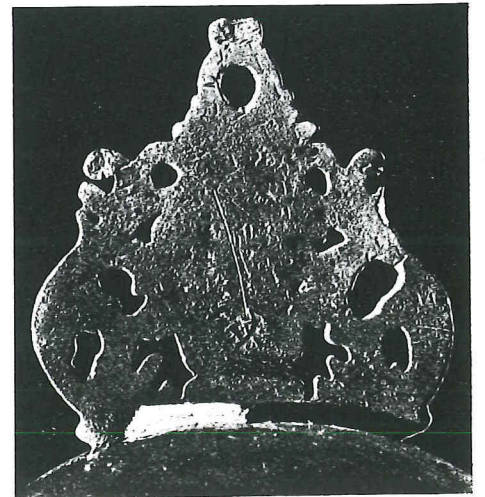
This study was undertaken with the hope of learning more about the initialed porringers. From that standpoint it proved fruitless but it brought out so much of interest along other lines that the time spent seems well rewarded. Many of the rare items have been inadequately illustrated, if at all. I have received most generous help in the preparation of this article. I have subscribed it, because the words are mine, but most of the music is by Ledlie I. Laughlin and Joseph France.

All crown-handled porringers have the familiar type of bowl, with a boss in the center of the bottom, bulging sides, ending above in a straight-sided flange,



—Joseph France

5. Front and back views of the handle of the unique W B porringer.





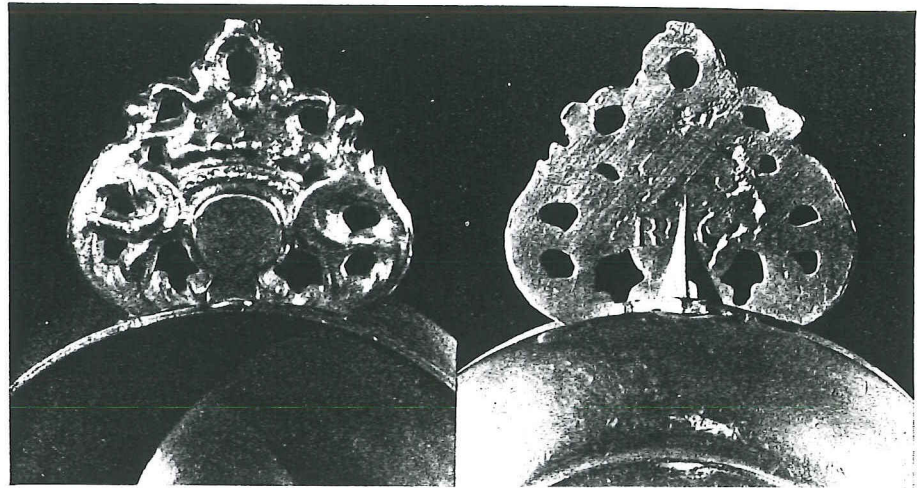
## Crown-Handled Porringers

(from page 11)

Everything indicates that this is correctly assigned to William Bradford of New York, who was working in 1719 and died in 1759. Practically contemporaneous with him was Joseph Leddell, Sr., who died in 1753. Whether it was he who made the same sort of porringer, marked I L in a circle, or his son Joseph, who died in 1754, is not known. The I L specimen in the Poole collection in the Brooklyn Museum of Art has two incised lines on the flange (fig. 6). Henry Will, who worked from 1761 to 1793, decorated at least one porringer in the same way. The W B and I L handles are so similar that one suspects that they were made from the same mold. From the Leddells it seems to have passed to William Kirby, working in New York from 1760 to 1793. Curiously enough, the unknown W N had a mold of this type, as can be seen by consulting Mr. Laughlin's plate XII, fig. 60. He used it on his small porringers only, and not on all of them.

(C). Boardman type. In my previous article I called this the Danforth type, but the term now used is more appropriate. It is not known who first made porringers of this sort. The oldest definitely identifiable specimen I know was made by Thomas Danforth Boardman, who used his own touch from 1805 to 1820. Later specimens have the Boardman & Co. touch (fig. 8), or the T. D. & S. B. initials (fig. 7). The particular feature of this type is the broad support of the shield, destroying the lower part of the circle and producing a shape which I can only compare with an old-fashioned key-hole cover. There may be five or six large bosses above the barrulet. Mr. Laughlin shows on his Pl. LI, fig. 357, a part of the handle of the oldest known specimen of this type. The touch is I D with a lion rampant. This may be either John Danforth of Norwich, working about 1773 to 1793, or his nephew, Joseph, of Middletown, who worked from about 1782 to 1788.

Porringers of this sort were also made by W N, who had three handle-molds. The one of the English-New York type has already been mentioned. The other two differed in that those he used on the



—Joseph France

11. Front and back of the ear of the unique R G porringer. Note the careless finish of the front, the thick rat-tail and Rhode Island bracket on the back.

large porringers had five bosses above the barrulet, those on the smaller ones had six. The somewhat twisted S G used the same handle on his small porringers. These two were not from the same mold, for S G had a rat-tail, W N none.

(D). The I G - S G type. This seems to be a modification of the Boardman type, although it may be that this is older than the Boardman, and that the latter is an improvement on it. The shield and its support produce a key-hole cover design, but attached to either side of the support is a large boss. There may be either five or six bosses in the row above the barrulet. The oldest specimen yet seen is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (fig. 9). This was marked by I & H (Ingram & H—)? Bewdley, Worcestershire, England, c. 1780-1820. As shown in the photograph, it now has a strainer in it. Miss Louise Avery writes me that it was not born there, for it bears the curious touch of an amorino between the halves of the date 17/66. Miss Avery is inclined to think that it is Dutch or German. Was it of any real use in a porringer? It is too old to belong to a coffee percolator. Perhaps it served to separate the consomme above the potage below. Drink and meat in the same bowl.

S G made porringers in two sizes. Only

the large ones have handles of this sort (fig. 10). There are five bosses above the barrulet.

Whoever he was, S G made good vessels, in marked contrast to I G and R G. I G was exceedingly productive, but if he ever did a good job I have not seen the evidence. The lower surface of the handle is good, with a narrow rat-tail, but the upper one is rough, pitted, unfinished. A feature which has been generally overlooked is that both have the typical linguiform Rhode Island bracket supporting the handle. All other crown-handles have angular brackets, varying from right to highly obtuse angles. Does that mean that the I G and R G were made in Rhode Island? Richard Lee was the only person not a Rhode Islander, who, so far as I know, used the bracket of the Melvilles, Hamlin, and Calder. But of course he started in Taunton, once in Rhode Island territory, I believe. What sort of bracket would the Bostoners have used, if they had made porringers? Who knows!

Only one R G specimen (fig. 11) has been found, which is fortunate, for it is even worse than I G. R G, Roswell Gleason? No! The R G handle resembles that of I G, with six bosses above the barrulet, but on the back it has a much more blunt and thicker rat-tail.

## Traveling About

(from page 17)

MISS T. T. FOLEY, after returning from an extended stay in Mexico, will re-open her shop in Paris, Ill., in larger and more suitable quarters.

THE WEDGWOOD CLUB of Boston, at a meeting in February, heard a talk by Mrs. Bertram K. Little on 17th and 18th century redwares in imitation of the Chinese. Mrs. Little's interest had evolved from a former Club meeting in 1934, when she was led to begin her study and collecting of redware objects, Chinese as well as European examples. The story opens with the Buccaro-ware made at Yi-hsing as early as the Ming period. With the tea imported first to the English and Dutch shores came the

reddish or brown teapots and other vessels. No wonder that with the rising popularity of the new beverage, efforts were made to produce imitations of the Chinese redware. Mrs. Little mentioned the late 17th century Dutch potter, Arij de Milde, as successful in such imitations. The inventor of the first true porcelain on the continent, Johann Boettger, made a redware finer and harder than the Dutch ware; it was in quality of material already close to his forthcoming invention of the true white porcelain. Continental potters, the Elers brothers, from the lower Rhine or Holland, are said to have been the first in England to produce porcelainous redware. But the few preserved pieces seem too late to be made by one of the Elers. Some now are definitely attributed to Josiah Wedgwood.