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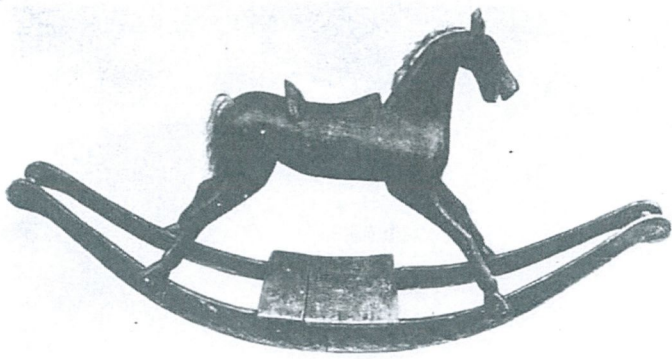


FIG. 3 — NINETEENTH-CENTURY ROCKING HORSE  
 Found near Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Carved from wood and painted red. The leather ears, hemp tail and mane are restorations. Water-color rendering by Elizabeth Fairchild of the Index of American Design. From the collection of Miss Frances M. Kline

### Save the Index of American Design!

THE esthetic wealth of this country has received less Governmental attention than the Japanese beetle. Only the merest beginning has been made toward an official recording of our nation's artistic history, particularly that of the less formal arts. This beginning has been due to the efforts of the Index of American Design, a part of the WPA Art Project. The purpose of the Index, briefly stated, is to provide an authoritative graphic survey of American decorative arts and crafts from the days of the earliest settlements to the late nineteenth century. That is a large order, but one whose importance to the scholar, collector, teacher, and designer in America is quite obvious. Much has been published on American decorative arts, but no comprehensive, fully illustrated single work such as the Index is preparing exists. Whatever may be thought of the usefulness of certain other projects of the WPA, it is certainly true that work already done by the Index of American Design is its own justification, as those who have seen its numerous exhibitions can testify. It has made a laudable contribution. Its program deserves support in order that the work may be continued.

This work is being done under the direction of qualified authorities in the field of American antiquities. Its chief tangible result is a series of accurate drawings, mostly in water color, of significant objects from collections of museums, dealers, and private owners. Selections from the several thousand plates available have been reproduced in ANTIQUES during the past three years. Another is shown in Figure 3. Each drawing is supplemented with a complete "data sheet" recording pertinent historical and other information, dug up by the Index research workers. Except in the fields of furniture and costume, emphasis is placed on the work of primitive craftsmen, produced for domestic use, and, with few exceptions, only work produced in America is included.

This project is part of the WPA program which was drastically curtailed by Congress last June. Although not completely abolished, as was the Federal Theater, it has suffered considerable reduction in personnel. The clause discontinuing self-sponsorship of Federal Projects carries a threat against the entire Index program after January first.

Unlike most endeavors of the WPA Art Project, the Index has hitherto had no local support in the form of direct contribution, financial or otherwise. Sponsorship for the Index is essential. It is needed primarily in the form of funds to underwrite publication of the plates, so that they may be made available for study and use. The Project has worked out a publication plan whereby folios of plates would be released periodically on a subscription basis.

It would require a nominal outlay and the subscription price could be kept at a very reasonable figure.

The research material that the Index has thus far amassed is likewise deserving of publication. It includes much information derived from primary sources which is not readily available. The list of early craftsmen would be particularly helpful. This material might be produced in periodical pamphlets, perhaps under the imprint of a museum or other public institution. The establishment of a reference library of the plates themselves, of which there are many more than could be included in any immediate plan of publication, is another worthy possibility which would require sponsorship in the form of equipment and space.

But before any of these excellent plans can be executed, the Index must be kept in existence and must be assured of continued Governmental support. There is very real danger that any further WPA curtailment, begun in the last Congress, will cause suspension of the Index and the loss of much that it has thus far achieved. One means of helping to keep this valuable project alive is to express interest and approval to Congressmen, to the WPA administration, to the administration of the Art Project, and to municipal authorities in the cities where divisions of the Index are located. Such assistance is within the reach of everyone, and should be given without delay.

### For Good Measure

THE baluster measure in pewter is a typically English form. Howard H. Cotterell, in his *Old Pewter*, said, "Found only in pewter, and nowhere outside the British Isles, the Baluster, with various modifications of detail, was our great national measure for more than three centuries, and occurs from quarter Gill to Gallon capacity." J. B. Kerfoot commented, in

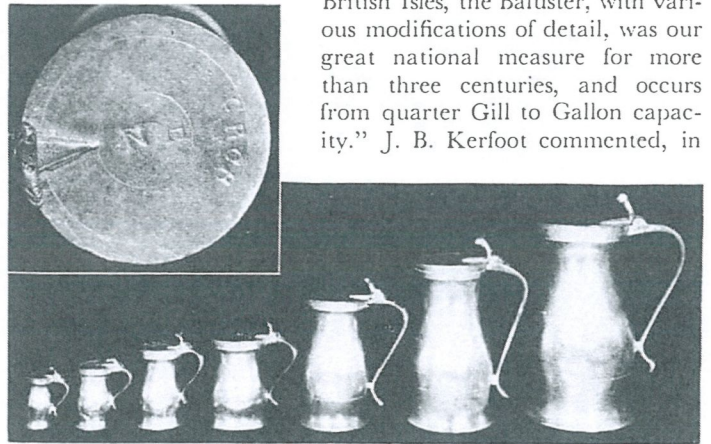


FIG. 4 — SET OF PEWTER MEASURES

Probably American, though of the typically English baluster shape. "Bud" thumbpiece, wedge-shaped lid attachment. The largest (gallon size) has a flat handle terminal. All are stamped N.H. for New Hampshire, and C.R. for reasons unknown. The inset shows the lid, with thumbpiece, lid attachment, ornamental concentric rings, and stamped initials.

From the New Hampshire Historical Society

his *American Pewter*, on the scarcity of graded English measures in this country, and said that he knew of no specimens of American make. Now, fortunately, this vacancy can be filled.

In the collections of the New Hampshire Historical Society at Concord is a set of seven graded liquid measures in pewter (Fig. 4). Consisting of the gallon, half-gallon, quart, pint, half-pint, gill, and half-gill measures, the set appears to be complete and remarkably well preserved, though it is possible that originally the quarter gill, mentioned by Cotterell, rounded out the list. The lid of each measure is stamped with the initials N.H. and C.R., as shown in the illustration. According to Otis G. Hammond, director of the Society and an old friend of the Magazine, who generously forwarded photographs of the set to the Attic, a



law passed in 1718 establishing weights and measures in New Hampshire specified that covers of liquid measures should bear the initials *P.N.H.* (for *Province of New Hampshire*). These pieces were probably made under that law, which stood unchanged on the books for many years. Perhaps the *P* was omitted from their lids for lack of space within the inner circle; or more probably they were made after New Hampshire had ceased to be a province and had become a state. The significance of the letters *C.R.* is a question. Mr. Hammond suggests that they may have been the initials of a local sealer of weights and measures, as under the law measures were provided by the towns and not by the province.

In form and details these measures seem to be of the "bud" type, as classified by Cotterell according to the shape of the thumbpiece. They are, indeed, closely analogous to English examples, yet they bear no English pewterer's marks. All but one of them show no marks at all, and on that one the partially obscured mark on the cover is so faint as to be virtually indecipherable. It appears to be a variant of the polymorphous "angel" mark — which does not furnish much of a clue to the maker's identity.



FIG. 5 — ABIGAIL, AUNT ELECTA, AND PHOEBE  
With "unbreakable" heads made according to Greiner's patent of 1858. This and Figures 6 and 7 from the collection of Miss Helyn Ewing Fowler; photographs by Eric Stahlberg

Just when the measures were made would be difficult to determine. In England the style continued almost unchanged through three centuries, into the reign of Victoria. According to Kerfoot, the earliest use in a pewterer's mark of incised letters, like the *N.H.* and *C.R.* on these pieces, instead of relief letters against a depressed ground, was in 1833. If that distinction applies to such official marks as these initials, their date would be later than one might otherwise surmise.

Whenever and wherever the measures were made, they are a rare and unusually interesting set. And they have been accepted by expert authority as of American workmanship.

### Playthings of the Past

THE first article in the first issue of *ANTIQUES*, January 1922, written by Alice Van Leer Carrick, was titled *Playthings of the Past*. In the eighteen years that have passed since that article appeared, *ANTIQUES* has presented many notes, brief and extended, on old dolls and other early playthings, and has illustrated a profusion of examples which, if gathered together in one room, would keep any youngster — or any antiquary — happy for days on end. The Magazine has occasionally been

criticized for this attention to childish things — not so much of recent years, to be sure, when the appreciation of old dolls has increased almost to the proportions of a vogue. But no one need apologize for an interest in old playthings. Since the beginning of time, miniature effigies of people and the things they live with have been made and cherished by young and old. As historical documents they deserve respect.

Hence in this issue — because Christmas is the season of toys — *ANTIQUES* presents another article on old-time playthings. And the Attic here illustrates certain members of the doll family of Miss Helyn Ewing Fowler of Northampton, Massachusetts. Abigail, Aunt Electa, and Phoebe (*Fig. 5*) are all labeled Greiner dolls. Ludwig Greiner of Philadelphia obtained for his "Improvement in Constructing Doll-Heads" the first doll patent in this country. It was issued March 30, 1858. A detailed discussion of Greiner dolls occurs in *ANTIQUES* for June 1937 (*p.* 300). The patented doll heads, which were claimed to be unbreakable, were made of *papier mâché* reinforced with fabric, and were actually capable of resisting innumerable hard knocks.

Miss Fowler's Susan is a good deal older than the Greiner girls, and, frankly, less alluring, though her superior age entitles her to greater deference (*Fig. 6*). She claims to be a hundred and ten years old, though her costume makes her look nearly thirty years younger. Her head, with its pug hairdress and screw curls, is of *papier mâché*. Her wasp-waisted body is of kid, and her limbs are wooden. Her hooped dress is of homespun.

An unusual item in Miss Fowler's collection, not here illustrated, is a double-faced wax doll. The invention of this remarkable creature, which is credited to one Fritz Bartenstein, of Hüttensteinach, Germany, was patented in this country, July 5, 1881. In his patent papers, from which Figure 7 is here reproduced, the inventor declares, in part: "My invention consists in a movable doll head having two faces of different expression and being partly covered with a hood, in which it can be turned horizontally, so as to show either of the two faces while the other is hidden. . . . By rapidly turning the head one hundred and eighty degrees one can produce a surprising illusion in consequence of the disappearance of the weeping face and the appearance of the laughing face."

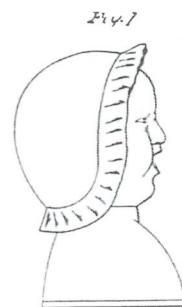


FIG. 6 (*below*) — SUSAN (c. 1830)

FIG. 7 (*right*) — DOUBLE-FACED DOLL HEAD (patented 1881)

