

6909

Oval pewter box

RIDDLES AND REPLIES

All questions should be clearly written on one side of the paper only, addressed to the Queries Editor, and accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Questions involving identifications should be accompanied by a clear photograph, and proper names quoted should be printed in capital letters. ANTIQUES does not give valuations.

356. The oval pewter box in the accompanying illustration belongs to Mrs. Bertram K. Little. Its size and shape recall the ample silver tea caddies decorated with bright-cut engraving in use late in the eighteenth century. The box is, however, equipped with a second flat lid with urn-shape finial which fits loosely inside the container. This second lid identifies Mrs. Little's piece as a tobacco box. Tobacco boxes of this type with two covers were made in other wares than metal. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art is an oval creamware Leeds tobacco jar finely decorated with silver luster and dated about 1800.



The bottom of the tobacco box displays a mark which encouraged Mrs. Little to entertain the exciting hope that here was a possibly unique piece of American pewter bearing a hitherto unrecorded mark of George Coldwell and a partner. George Coldwell, who was working in New York City between 1789 and 1811, is known to have made pieces out of the general run of pewter made in this country. A marked American tea caddy would be a find; a marked American tobacco box would be a five-star find. The somewhat illegible mark appeared to read *Coldwell M'Lean—or Dean—or M'Bean*. Mrs. Little, being a cautious and experienced collector, undertook a thorough search through early New York City directories for the name of Coldwell's partner. This effort was fruitless. Then in Frederick Bradbury's great *History of Sheffield Plate* she found a reference which points to an English origin for the tobacco box. Bradbury notes on page 494 that "Froggatt, *Coldwell* and *Lean* appear as 'Manufacturers of Britannia Metal Goods, and Silver Platers and factors, Eyre Street' " in the Sheffield directory of 1797. The mark of "Froggatt, *Coldwell* & *Lean*, 1797, Platers, Silversmiths & B. M. manufacturers" is given on page 445, and that of *W. Coldwell*, 1806, on page 446. Mrs. Little's tobacco box does not appear to be made of white metal or Britannia ware but of a dark-colored pewter which resists any attempt at shining. Were Froggatt, *Coldwell* and *Lean* successors to an unlisted *Coldwell* and *Lean*, and were the latter makers of pewter?

353. Francis D. Brinton, West Chester, Pennsylvania, has again supplied information about the maker of a labeled Windsor chair. Joseph Jones, who was mentioned in this column in December 1944, was a well-known chairmaker of West Chester, and frequently advertised his products in the newspapers. From 1817, when Jones informed the public that he was "commencing" the chairmaking business, his advertisements continued to appear for thirty years or more. Mr. Brinton quotes one of the advertisements for 1824 in which Jones offers *Bent and Straight Back Windsor Chairs and Settees, Common, Bent, and Straight Back Rush-seat Chairs*. A number of chairs with the label of Joseph Jones are on view at the Chester County Historical Society in the town where he conducted his business on West Gay Street, "nearly opposite the Academy."

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- Early American, octagonal, tray top, snake foot candle-stand in cherry and birch
- Pair of Irish cut decanters, approx. 14" high, with original stoppers

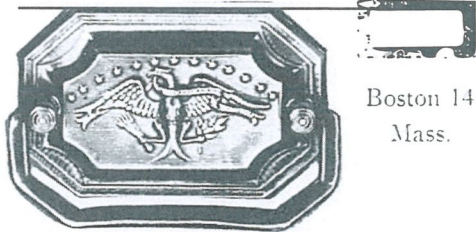
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