Another Bassett discovery

RY ADELBERT C. ABBOTT

FIRE DOME-TOP PEWTER tankard illustrated helps in untangling the problem of proper attribution of the several touches used by the pewtering Bassetts—Francis I, Francis II, and Frederick. In addition to the rare touch number 456 (Laughlin), this tankard bears a gift inscription dated Apriel 17 1766.

If we assume, as it seems reasonable to do, that the tankard was newly made when purchased and inscribed, hen the 1766 date eliminates Francis I as its maker, since the died in 1758. Frederick Bassett would have been only twenty-six years of age in 1766, and therefore, to paraphrase Gilbert and Sullivan, "hardly out of his indentures" as an apprentice pewterer. If in spite of this he was actually the maker, it is highly probable that he yould have used his 'own early touch, number 465,

ch as Ledlie I. Laughlin has pointed out was reletered from John Bassett's die number 458 by changing he I to F.

With both Francis I and Frederick eliminated, it vould appear that the touch number 456 seen on this ankard can with reasonable certainty be attributed to rancis Bassett II.

The proper attribution of the remaining Bassett touches oncerning which some uncertainty still exists bids fair be a difficult problem because of the close business flilation and apparent joint use of molds by the members of this distinguished family of pewterers. Mr. aughlin has pointed out to me, for instance, the strong robability that the handles of both his Frederick inkard and the one shown here by Francis II were cast a the same mold, since the same unevenly modulated urved line appears above the pendant bead at the top of the handle of each. Carefully taken measurements of the barrels of the Francis I tankard at the Brooklyn fuseum, the Frederick tankard owned by Mr. Laughlin,

the Francis II tankard illustrated are to all intents nd purposes identical, the minor differences in decorave detail simply reflecting the whim and fancy of the articular maker.

Perhaps we may anticipate finding more Bassett pieces ith both touches and inscriptions which would more efinitely indicate a proper attribution.

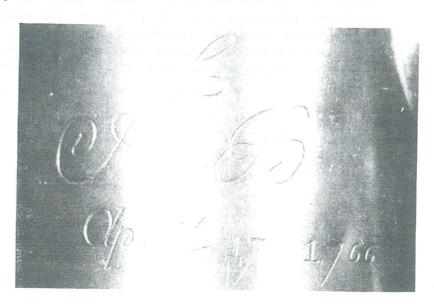


Detail of mark, number 456 in Ledlie 1, Laughlin's Pewter in America,



Dome-top tankard here attributed to Francis Bassett II. Author's collection.

Detail of inscription. eith date Apriel 17 1766.



NE 1953