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# PHILADELPHIA PEDIGREED PORRINGERS

By HARROLD E. GILLINGHAM

ENGLISH pewter porringers decorated in relief with busts of sovereigns are rare. To the few that have been discussed in ANTIQUES, it is now possible to add two more. Both were once owned by early-eighteenth-century Quaker inhabitants of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and are today in the possession of their descendants. They are commemorative of Protestant rulers of England, King William and Queen Mary, who reigned from 1689 to

English pewter. it is now owned by three Philadelphia sisters, direct descendants of the original owner. Samuel Brown, whose initials appear on the upper side of one handle of the bowl.

The piece is unusual in having three small handles in the shape of cocks on the lid, so placed that when the lid is inverted to serve as a plate, they act as feet. So far as I am aware, only one other example exhibiting this treatment has been recorded — a commemorative



FIG. 1 — COMMEMORATIVE PORRINGER

Three small cocks on lid, serving as handles, or as feet when lid is inverted. Pierced handles on owl. *A* shows the lid of this porringer, decorated with busts of Queen Anne, Prince George, and Prince Eugene, and mounted gure of Earl of Athlone; *B*, the interior of the bowl, with bust portrait of William of Orange; *C*, the maker's mark, impressed in handle: seated female figure; initials *S L*.

privately owned

1702, and Queen Anne and her husband, Prince George of Denmark, who were on the throne from 1702 to 1714; hence the dates of both porringers must be later.

The porringer of Figure 1 was originally owned by Samuel Brown (1694-1769), who lived on a plantation adjoining Pennsylvania, the country estate of William Penn on the banks of the Delaware River above Bristol. Samuel was the son of George Brown, who had settled there in 1679. As Samuel was American-born, he could not have brought this handsome piece of pewter from England. No doubt he purchased it from a Philadelphia merchant who had imported it with other pewter from England, as was the practice of many local merchants of the time. Made in the period which Howard Herschel Cotterell styled the golden age of

porringer listed as Type V by Adolphe Riff in ANTIQUES for October 1927 (p. 295). In the Magazine for July 1928 (p. 10). Cotterell illustrated a porringer with three lions sejant similarly arranged, but differing from this cock item in handles and in ornamentation of the lid.

The raised decoration of the lid shows a bust profile of Queen Anne at the left, facing that of her husband, Prince George, at the right. At the top, mounted on a horse, is the Earl of Athlone (1670-1703), a Dutch general who, as Godart Van Ginkel, captured the

town of Athlone, and later followed William, Prince of Orange, to Ireland, and in July 1690 commanded his cavalry at the battle of the Boyne. At the bottom — fairly obscured by the cock — is the bust of Prince Eugene of Savoy (1665-1736), who with the Duke of Marlborough won the battle of Blenheim, August 13, 1704; he later became governor of the Netherlands. All four portraits are framed in laurel wreaths, and interspersed with emblems of royalty and of war. When this ornamented cover is removed from the porringer, still another portrait decoration is revealed on the bottom of the six-inch bowl. There, framed by a laurel wreath, is the crowned and armored bust of King William adorned with a most voluminous wig. At the left, below a crown, is the initial *W*; at the right, the letter *R*, surmounted by an orb — William Rex.



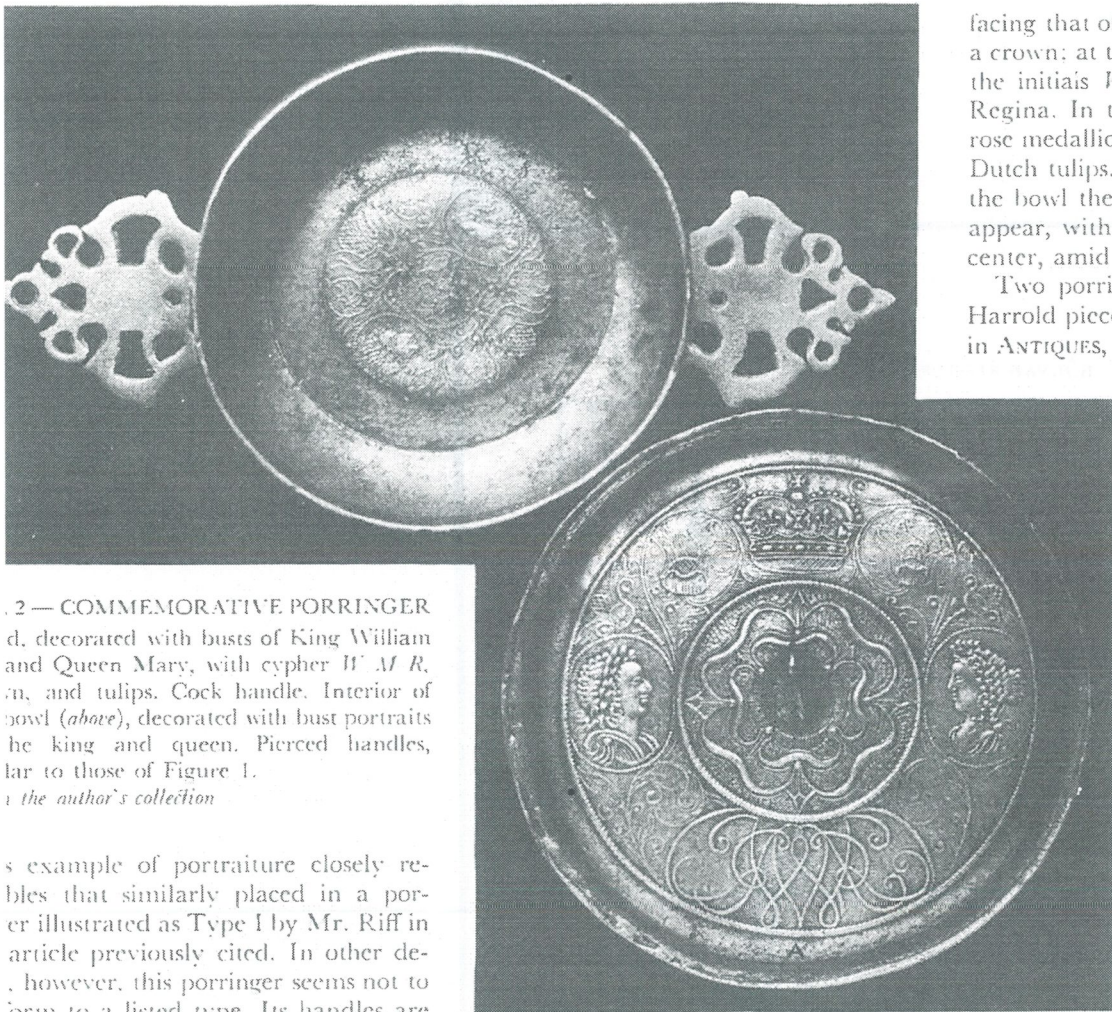


FIG. 2 — COMMEMORATIVE PORRINGER. Lid, decorated with busts of King William and Queen Mary, with cypher *W M R*, tulips, and a rose. Cock handle. Interior of bowl (*above*), decorated with bust portraits of the king and queen. Pierced handles, similar to those of Figure 1. In the author's collection.

This example of portraiture closely resembles that similarly placed in a porringer illustrated as Type I by Mr. Riff in an article previously cited. In other details, however, this porringer seems not to conform to a listed type. Its handles are those of Type II, but its cover decoration is quite individual. Though it may seem surprising that a Quaker should wish to possess a reminder of military times, we should remember that William had been a wearer of a crown to which Pennsylvania owed allegiance, and that he was, moreover, the first Protestant king of England after a long session of rulers faithful to the Roman church. The only clue to the maker of this porringer is a distinguishing but unidentified mark on the back of one handle. It differs from any mark listed in Terrell's *Old Pewter, Its Makers and Marks*, though it falls in the latter heterogeneous category of "angel" marks. The clothed female figure, unfortunately indistinct, appears to be seated; the object in her right hand looks more like a birdcage than anything else; the object she holds in her left is anybody's guess. Angel marks were common on Continental pewter as insignia of quality, and are frequently found also on English pewter. Though no wings are clearly visible, this figure may be an angel; it may quite as well be Britannia with her shield and spear, or Justice with scales and sword, or some other allegorical character. In the upper left field of the circular mark can be deciphered the letter *S*, in the right *L*, undoubtedly the initials of the maker. The mark shows no trace of having had a border in which the full name might have been inscribed (*Fig. 1, C*).

The other pedigreed pewter porringer (*Fig. 2*) formerly belonged to my great-grandfather, Samuel Harrold, likewise a Bucks county native, whose grandfather fought with William of Orange in the battle of the Boyne. As Samuel did not come to Pennsylvania until 1747, it is barely possible that he brought this piece with him to England. But as he carried on a mercantile business at Reading, Berks county, Bucks County, he too might have made his purchase in Philadelphia. Its handles are very similar to those of Samuel Brown's piece. Like that of the Brown item, the lid has a central decoration. On the left appears the bust of King William

facing that of Mary on the right. At the top is a crown; at the bottom, a cypher composed of the initials *W M R*, for William Rex, Mary Regina. In the center of the lid is a stylized rose medallion, and in the upper field are two Dutch tulips. On the bottom of the interior of the bowl the busts of the king and queen reappear, with tulips between and a rose in the center, amid entwining foliage.

Two porringers almost identical with this Harrold piece have previously been illustrated in *ANTIQUES*, one owned by the Essex Institute of Salem, Massachusetts (October 1927, p. 295), the other in the collection of Alfred B. Yeates (July 1928, p. 41). The latter differs in having a spool-shaped knob in place of the cock handle on the lid. Both these pieces bear the initials *J. W.*, the mark of the London pewterer John Waite, who was given leave to strike his mark on the London touchplate in 1673-1674. The Harrold porringer reveals no maker's mark whatsoever. Yet because of its similarity to the marked pieces, we may be justified in surmising that it, too, is the work of John Waite, whose mark was a circle enclosing his initials over a pair of scales.

## THE TREND IN COLLECTING

Collecting interests and collecting habits have changed in recent years, but antiques still survive and collecting goes on. New collectors and new dealers are bringing a fresh approach to the whole subject. The following article is by one of these progressive newcomers who is in charge of a leading New York shop. If his analysis of the current situation gives rise to comment, *pro* or *con*, *ANTIQUES* will be happy to publish further discussion of the subject.

— The Editor

EVER since primitive man first carved a few ornamental notches in his tree-trunk seat, the spirit of craftsmanship has constantly sought expression. And the desire of human beings to surround themselves with objects that satisfy their sense of beauty is as keen today as ever. Until relatively recent years, most Americans looked to Europe as the sole source of the decorative arts. There was little knowledge or appreciation of the handiwork of our own colonial artisans. The past thirty years, however, have seen a definite shift in the evaluation of our artistic heritage, along with a growing realization that in many instances America's craftsmen equaled, if not surpassed, those of the mother country.

The Hudson-Fulton exhibition of 1909 in New York City gave the first real impetus to this new appreciation. It resulted in the purchase of the Bolles collection of American furniture and its presentation to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Eugene Bolles, along with a handful of pioneers in the early 1900's, was one of those so-called crackpot collectors. Out of this primary interest, however, arose a wave of enthusiasm for American art marked by the installation of American wings in our major eastern and, later, western institutions; by the growth of historical societies to preserve and collect data and exemplars; by the assembling of private