





## Marked American Pewter

By CHARLES L. WOODSIDE

IT seems almost incredible that any of our American pewterers — especially those of the nineteenth century, whose work may be known to all lovers of the metal and whose names are impressed upon thousands of specimens of their handicraft — should, in the passage of time, drift into such obscurity as to render many things about them uncertain or unknown. Yet such is the case; and Mr. Kerfoot, in his admirable book *American Pewter*, has cited many instances of the kind.

That which follows treats of two pewterers whose history has hitherto been either unknown or forgotten. One of them is Smith & Company; the other Bailey & Putnam.

Both concerns were engaged in the manufacture of pewter during the middle period of the nineteenth century, and nearly all of their members lived in the immediate neighborhood of my own home in Malden, Massachusetts. They were industrious men, lived honorable lives, made good pewter, prospered and eventually passed on, leaving many evidences of their integrity and ability.

### SMITH & COMPANY: PREDECESSORS AND SUCCESSORS

This firm, which has been ascribed both to Connecticut and to Philadelphia,\* was located in Boston. The name here given is one of several of a partnership that was founded in 1841 by Thomas Smith and David B. Morey under the firm name of Smith & Morey. These men began business in a shop at 4 Market Street, corner of Merrimack Street in Boston, as manufacturers of block tin and pewter ware. Both men resided in Malden, and there is evidence to support the suggestion that for several years prior to the opening of the shop in Boston they were at work in their home town. This evidence, however, is not conclusive, and it is mentioned here as a subject for further investigation.

Thomas Smith was born in England in July, 1791, the son of Thomas and (?) Smith. It is not known when he came to Malden; but the records show that he was living there in 1834, on June 24 of which year he married Sarah

\*J. B. Kerfoot, *American Pewter*, Boston and New York, 1924, p. 18.

Upham. Both he and his bride were residents of the town at that time. It is quite probable that Thomas Smith followed the trade of his father, as was commonly the custom in those days; and it is interesting to note that he, in turn, was followed by a son, Thomas Jr., who lived in Chelsea, Massachusetts, and who made britannia ware there and in Boston during the 1860's.

Thomas Smith, Sr., lived on Main Street south of Madison Street, Malden, in a house, still standing, in that part of the town then known as Bailey's Hill. He was a member of the firm during most of its many changes, and retired from it in 1864. In 1870 he is recorded as being engaged in the manufacture of britannia ware on Causeway Street, opposite the Eastern Railroad station, and in 1872 he was in the employ of his son, Thomas Smith, Jr., as a britannia worker in the latter's shop at 81 Second Street, Chelsea. He died in Malden on November 2, 1876, at the ripe age of eighty-five years and four months.

David B. Morey, the other founder of the firm, was born in Malden, May 6, 1807. He married Almira Bailey, a daughter of Timothy and Eunice Sweetser Bailey of Malden, May 9, 1842. The couple lived in a house still occupied by their descendants on Hillside Avenue (formerly High Street) on Bailey's Hill.\*

Mr. Morey was a member of the firm during nearly the entire period of its existence — from its beginning in 1841 as Smith & Morey, until he retired from active business in 1882. He died in Malden, March 31, 1885. The firm of Morey & Smith ceased operating in 1886.

Of the two other members of the firm during its pewter period, very little is known — other than that Henry White lived in East Cambridge and Reuben H. Ober lived at 24 London Street, Boston, and later boarded at 10 Sudbury Street, near the shop.

The chronology of the firm, together with the various changes of firm name and personnel, is as follows:

\*This hill derived its name from Timothy Bailey, who also lived on the hill, at the corner of Main and Madison Streets, near the residence of Thomas Smith. Mr. Bailey was a man of considerable prominence in Malden, and he was, in company with James H. Putnam under the firm name of Bailey & Putnam, a manufacturer of pewter and tin ware in Malden, as will be related further on.



Fig. 1 — HAVERHILL STREET AND HAYMARKET SQUARE. In 1847, Smith & Company moved their pewter business to the corner here pictured. In 1871, as Morey & Ober, the concern shifted location to the building marked *Marble Shop*.



Fig. 2 — ADVERTISEMENT OF SMITH & COMPANY. From the Boston Directory of 1848.

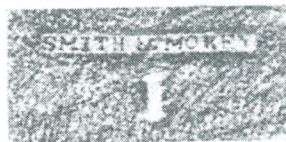


Fig. 3 — MARK OF SMITH & MOREY 1841-1842.



Fig. 4 (right) — TEAPOT BY MOREY & SMITH (1857-1864)  
Height 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ "  
Owned by Mrs. Annie L. Woodside.

- 1841-1842 Smith & Morey  
(Thomas Smith,  
David B. Morey)
- 1842-1846 Thomas Smith & Company  
(Thomas Smith,  
D. B. Morey,  
H. White)
- 1847-1848 Smith & Company  
(Thomas Smith,  
H. White, D. B.  
Morey)
- 1849-1851 Smith, Ober & Co.  
(Thomas Smith,  
R. H. Ober, D. B.  
Morey)
- 1852-1854 Morey & Ober  
(D. B. Morey,  
R. H. Ober)



in the personnel but not in firm name — until 1886, when it went out of business.

In the beginning, in 1841, Smith & Morey were located at 4 Market Street, where they remained until 1847. In that year they moved to 2 and 3 Haverhill Street, opposite the old Boston & Maine Railroad depot, which stood for so many years in Haymarket Square. A picture of the building, a portion of which they occupied, is shown in Figure 1, marked *Haverhill St.* and *Haymarket Sq.* In 1853 they moved again, into the adjoining building, 5 and 7 Haverhill Street, marked in the picture *Marble Sawing*; and later, in 1858, they moved once more, this time further down on Haverhill Street to number 49, where they remained until the end.

The first advertisement of the firm that I have been able to find is that of Smith & Company in the *Boston Directory* of 1847. This was followed in 1848 by the illustrated announcement shown in

Fig. 5 (left) — LAMPS BY SMITH & COMPANY (1847-1848)  
Heights exclusive of burners (left to right) 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", 3", 6".  
From the author's collection.

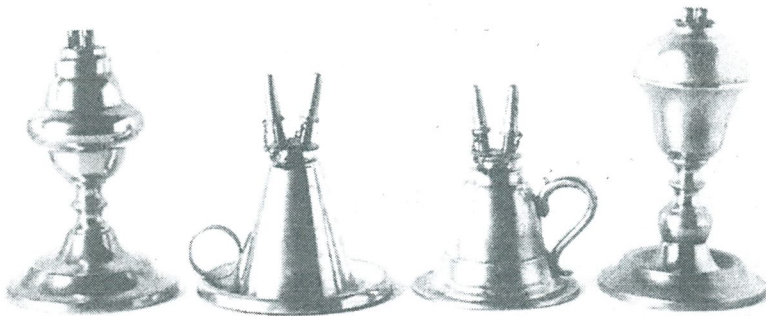


Fig. 6 (below) — LAMPS BY THREE MAKERS  
a. SMITH & MOREY (1841-1842). Height 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ ".  
b. Morey & Ober (1852-1854). Height 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ ".  
c. Morey & Smith (1857-1864). Height 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ ".  
From the author's collection.

- 1855-1856 Morey, Ober & Co.  
(D. B. Morey, R. H. Ober,  
Thomas Smith)
- 1857-1864 Morey & Smith  
(D. B. Morey, Thomas Smith)

In 1862 the manufacture of pewter apparently ceased — the demand for it having greatly diminished. The sale of glassware, in which the firm had also been engaged for many years, now became, with the sale of britannia, its principal interest. So the concern continued — with some further changes

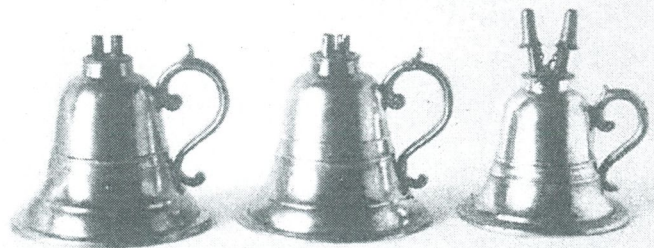




Figure 2. The reading matter in both is the same. This advertisement was continued in exactly the same form, except for the change in the firm name and the names of its members, until 1885, when the removal to 49 Haverhill Street took place and the business shifted to the sale of glassware and britannia.

The pewter turned out by this firm, under all of its various names, was of excellent quality and workmanship, and the designs were always in good taste. Coffee pots, teapots, sugar bowls, creamers, lamps and candlesticks were made. These articles are to be found marked sometimes with one firm name, sometimes with another. I have yet to find, however, a full line of pewter ware bearing the name of any one of the successive concerns. The output must have been considerable and well distributed; for, although specimens are becoming rare, they are to be found occasionally, sometimes in very remote places. I consider them worthy of a place on the shelf of any collector of American pewter.

Each of the successive firms used its own touch-mark, changing the form in accordance with its own taste or fancy. Figure 3 shows the mark of Smith & Morey as used in 1841 when the business was founded.

I do not know how many molds were used by the concern, but it would appear that the numbering of the molds remained unchanged throughout. The highest mold number that I can recall having seen is 13. This is the number of the teapot shown in Figure 4, made by Morey & Smith.

In Figure 5 are shown lamps by Smith & Company (1847-1848). The second one from the left is very rare. Three other lamps are shown in Figure 6, the one at the left by Smith & Morey (1841-1842), the middle one by Morey & Ober (1852-1854); and that at the right by Morey & Smith (1857-1864).

#### BAILEY & PUTNAM AND PUTNAM

The firm of Bailey & Putnam and later, after the partnership between the two men had been dissolved, Putnam, was located in Malden, Massachusetts, and was engaged in the manufacture of tin ware and pewter during the second quarter of the 1800's. The firm was first composed of Timothy Bailey and James Hervey Putnam. Each continued in business independently after the dissolution of the partnership.

Timothy Bailey was born in Westmoreland, New Hampshire, September 20, 1785 — the eleventh of a family of twelve children. His father was a farmer, and, like most farmers' boys of his day, Timothy worked during the summer and received such elementary education as he could secure in the little red schoolhouse during the winter.

As his father was in somewhat poor circumstances, Timothy, at the age of nine, went to live with an uncle in Tewksbury, Massachusetts. It was intended that he should learn the trade of this uncle, a shoemaker, and that he should eventually succeed to the business. But nothing came of the plan. After remaining for nine years with the uncle, Timothy rejoined his father, who, in the meantime, had moved to Andover, Massachusetts.

In the spring of 1805, being then twenty years of age and having secured his time by the payment of forty dollars to his father, Timothy went to work on the farm of Dr. Adams at Lynnfield. During the following summer while mowing in the hayfield, he suffered a severe sunstroke, which rendered him incapable of manual labor, and from which he did not fully recover for several years.

As farming was now out of the question, the young man sought Preceptor Newman of Phillips Academy at Andover, who advised him to take a course at the Academy by way of fitting himself to teach

a common school in some of the back towns. The advice was followed. That Timothy succeeded very well may be inferred from the fact that, at the end of three months, the preceptor gave him so fine a recommendation that he secured a position in the school at Dracut, where he taught during the following winter.

But the pay was small — fourteen dollars a month — the season short and the total income insufficient to keep him. What to do! Should he accept the offer of Burrage Yale, the tin ware maker of South Reading (now Wakefield) and become a peddler? That did not appeal to him; for, realizing that peddlers did not have a very good name abroad, he thought he should not like the business. To this Deacon Eaton replied that it made no difference whether a man peddled tin from house to house, or whether he was a clerk and stood behind the counter and sold goods to those who came in to buy — it was the man's character that counted. And so it came about that Timothy Bailey entered into the business which he was to follow with remarkable success during the remainder of his life.

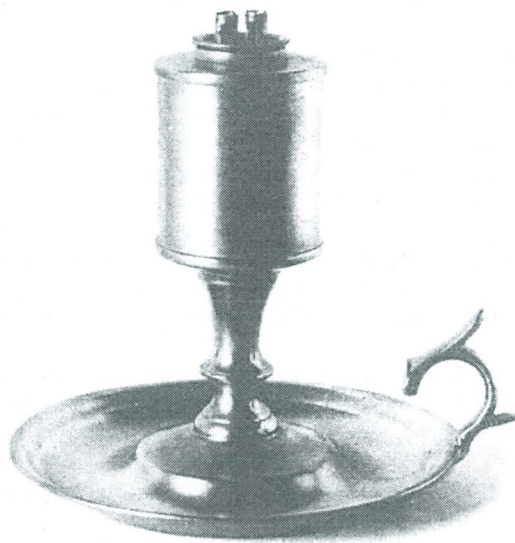


Fig. 7 — LAMP BY BAILEY & PUTNAM  
The rare product of a brief partnership.  
From the author's collection.



Fig. 8 — MARK OF  
BAILEY & PUTNAM



Bailey worked eight years for Yale, and it is interesting to note here what he says about it. It answers the oft asked question as to how wares found their way into such remote places. He says: "I went from town to town and from state to state peddling wares until I sold my load; then I went home for another load. I had to drive a two-wheel horse cart with a box made fast on the shafts and axle-tree to hold the wares. The harness for the horse to draw it with was a saddle, leather breastplate and rope tugs and a wooden whiffletree, and a bridle without reins. I had to walk beside the horse all day, hot or cold, and put up at night with private families as I could find them. I drove the same cart and harness for Mr. Yale for eight years in succession with the exception of the cold season of the winter. I walked beside my horse to average about two thousand miles a year for eight years."

In 1815 Bailey left the employ of Burrage Yale and set up in business for himself in Roxbury, making and selling tin ware. In 1817, on January 21, he married Eunice Sweetser, daughter of Paul Sweetser of South Reading, and in October, 1819, he moved to Malden and settled there permanently. He purchased the house which, at that time, stood on Main Street, southerly corner of Madison Street, but which, after his death, was moved around the corner and still stands, practically unchanged, at 20 Madison Street. Only recently did the place pass out of the family's ownership. Near by, also on Main Street, in later years stood the home of Thomas Smith; and a little further away

on High Street was that of Smith's partner, David B. Morey. It will be remembered that, on May 9, 1842, Morey married Bailey's daughter Almira; and it will be related further on that Bailey was an uncle of Putnam, so that the community of interest among these people must have been close and strong.

In the rear part of his house Timothy Bailey established his shop.

Tradition still recalls the vast heap of bright shining scrap tin that was piled up in the yard back of the house. He worked hard, prospered and soon became a leading citizen of the town; and that part in which he lived became known as Bailey's Hill. In 1833 he organized the Malden Agricultural & Mechanics' Association, the first bank in Malden. Its office was installed in his house; he was elected its treasurer and so served for eighteen consecutive years. When, in 1851, the bank was absorbed by the newly organized Malden Bank, he was elected president of that institution and so remained until his death. Meanwhile, he was town treasurer from 1832 to 1840, and a member of the General Court in 1836.

The business conducted by Bailey must have been considerable. At one time he had as many as eight workmen in the shop and sixteen peddlers on the road. While he appar-

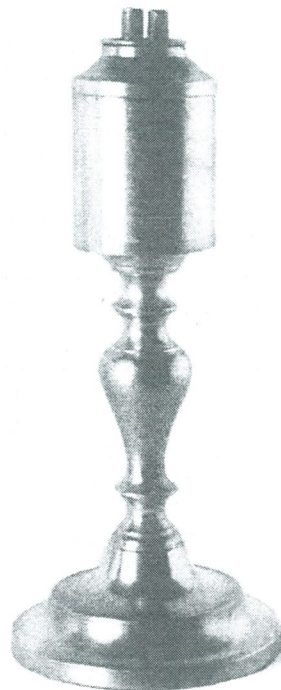
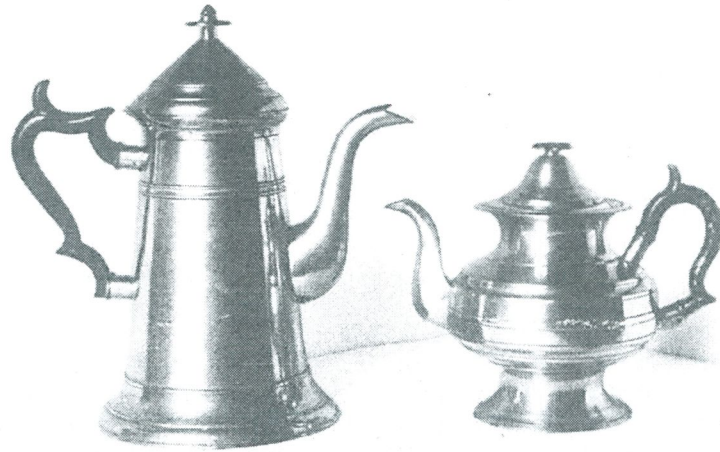


Fig. 9 (above) — PUTNAM PEWTER (1835-1855)  
Height of coffee pot 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Height of teapot 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ ".  
Owned by Mrs. Annie L. Woodside.

Fig. 10 (below) — LAMP BY PUTNAM (1835-1855)  
Height 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ ".  
From the author's collection.



Fig. 11 — PUTNAM'S MARK

ently confined his work to the making of tin ware, it is probable that he made pewter



also — as was the custom in those days, although I have never seen any pieces bearing his name, nor do I know of any existing. He accumulated a sufficient competence to keep him in comfort during his declining years; but he did not live long to enjoy it, for he passed away on November 19, 1852, at the age of sixty-seven.

James Hervey Putnam, the other partner in the firm of Bailey & Putnam, was born in Charlestown, New Hampshire, in 1803, the son of David and Hannah Bailey Putnam. His mother was a sister of Timothy Bailey, who was, therefore, Putnam's uncle. Very little is known of his early history, nor is it known when he came to Malden; but, from such information as I have been able to obtain, it seems probable that he came with his parents soon after Bailey settled there. It is said that he entered the employ of his uncle, serving his apprenticeship and afterward becoming a partner.

Just when this partnership was in operation I am unable to state with definiteness. The most diligent search has failed to discover any information. It is known there was such a partnership and that there are marked specimens of pewter to prove it. I fix the date tentatively about 1830-1835 — partly from hearsay evidence and partly because it could not have been before 1824, when Putnam became of age, nor after 1836, when the Massachusetts state census shows that there were two tin ware shops in Malden employing twenty hands and manufacturing goods to the value of thirty-one thousand dollars. As the largest number of hands employed by Bailey was eight, we may reasonably infer that the other twelve were employed by Putnam — for, other than these two shops, there were none of a similar kind in Malden at that time.

The business of Bailey & Putnam was conducted at Bailey's house — the partnership being, I imagine, an incident of comparatively short duration. Their output of pewter must have been of limited extent, if one may judge from the very few marked specimens of their work that are

known to exist. In Figure 7 is shown a whale oil lamp made by Bailey & Putnam; and Figure 8 pictures their regular mark.

After the partnership had been dissolved, Putnam opened his own shop in the brick building which still stands at the corner of Main Street and Eastern Avenue, then called Haskins Street, while Bailey continued as before. In his own establishment Bailey seems to have done a large and prosperous business. His principal manufacture at first, like that of his uncle, was tin ware; but eventually the making of pewter and britannia seems to have become of much greater importance. The state census for the year ending June 1, 1855, records that in the one establishment in Malden for the manufacture of pewter and britannia ware (one only, for Bailey had died in 1852) the value of the goods produced as eighteen thousand dollars; the hands employed were eighteen.

On June 8, 1826, James Hervey Putnam married Mary Hill of Malden. Both were of old New England stock. Eleven children were born to them, but none of them is now living, so far as I know. One connection of the family, a son-in-law, has just died at the age of eighty-five years. He was my near neighbor and friend, an active and honored citizen whose mind was bright and clear to the last.

The pewter made by Putnam was of the usual variety. It was of excellent quality, fine workmanship and good design. In the New England *Business Directory* of 1849, Putnam is classed with Israel Trask and Eben Smith of Beverly and Roswell Gleason of Dorchester. Specimens of his work are not very difficult to find and they are well worth collecting. In Figure 9 are shown two of his pieces — a coffee pot and a teapot; and in Figure 10 is shown a whale oil lamp. Figure 11 shows Putnam's regular mark.

James Hervey Putnam died in May, 1855, at the age of fifty-two years. Several children survived him, but as they were too young to carry on the business the shop was closed.

## The Cleaning of Pewter

THE subject of pewter cleaning is one that is often under discussion. Each collector has his own theory on the subject and his own method of procedure.

It is possible to have pewter too clean or, at any rate, too bright. In that fact lies one objection to wheel burnishing. The process removes not only rust but the precious mellow patina which is a desirable attribute. It tends to give pewter a skinned look which is distressing to the eye of the sensitive collector.

For occasional cleaning of pewter nothing is better than soap and water followed by conscientious rubbing. But, for the piece which, through years of neglect, comes to hand in a profound state of grime and rust, a more heroic form of bath must be prepared.

Certain types of corrosion in pewter are incurable. They are due to changes in the constituent antimony. Eventually these changes will produce holes and apparently nothing can be done to prevent.

H. J. L. J. Massé in *The Pewter Collector*\* suggests various methods of dealing with ordinary black tarnish. One of these is

the use of hydrochloric acid applied with a brush. This is a risky procedure, however, as the acid attacks not only the tarnish but the metal as well. Hence, wiping the treated part must follow close on the heels of the acid application.

Soaking in kerosene for some hours, followed by more hours of patient rubbing is likewise recommended by Mr. Massé. Soaking in hot water in which a small quantity of potash — a heaping teaspoonful to a quart of water — has been dissolved is, perhaps, as efficacious.

Various applications of powdered brick with acids are suggested by different English writers. The American owner of pewter will find it easier, and quite as satisfactory, to invest in a ready mixed metal polish.

Some persons clean pewter with the aid of soap and sand; but the latter should be very fine in quality, and various commercial abrasives are safer to use and more easily procured. For the final rub use chamois skin.

Antonio De Navarro in his *Causeries on English Pewter* urges patience in cleaning. Long polishing by hand he maintains brings that "quiet lustre" which is a special attribute of pewter and one not to be jeopardized by get-clean-quick methods.

\*New York, 1921, p. 35.