

7245

LATE GEORGIAN FURNITURE

"Amazon" shield supporting two eagles' heads grasping rings. Students of heraldry will easily trace its ancestral home. It was given to the Museum by Sir James D. Linton.

Figures 9 and 10, both of about 1800, are of beech-wood painted and gilt. The gifted artist Angelica Kauffmann, born in 1741 and commencing her artistic career in England in 1765 and not dying till 1805, may possibly have painted the classical medallions on these two chairs. At any rate they are in the Kauffmann manner and we can imagine their natural home as being in the Adelphi Terrace in close association with the Adam-Flaxman mantelpieces and Zucchi ceilings. The cane-work in the arm-chair fig. 9, particularly in its application to the oval back rest, shows the acme of refinement in a craft which practically disappeared with the Carolean and Orange Régime furni-

ture, but was in full flower again in Sheraton's time. A Chippendale chair with cane-work is almost unthinkable.

Jane Austen might have lived with the furniture illustrating these notes. It is all just of her period. It was the furniture of the households of the Bertrams, Tilneys, Woodhouses, Dashwoods and Elliots—Jane's delightful people who, invariably "gentlefolk," rarely aspired to any rank above that of the Baronetage. We can imagine the amiably indolent Lady Bertram on the sofa at Mansfield Park, Pug asleep by her side, whilst the indispensable Fanny Price at the sofa table indefatigably supplies her aunt's needs in needle-threading and the retrieving of thimbles and bodkins during the intervals of reading the news of the day and, in particular, the progress of her brother William's wonder ship "Thrush."

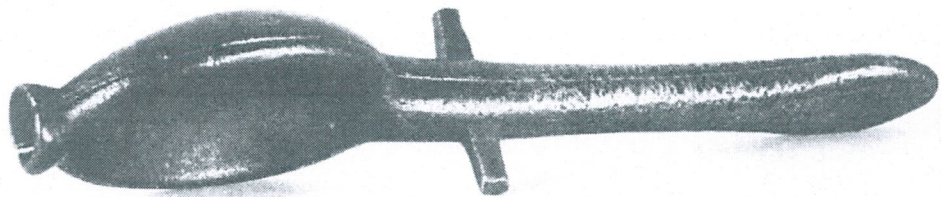


FIG. 1. OLD MOULD FOR PEWTER SPOONS
(In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

ps. 32-40

OLD AMERICAN PEWTER

By E. ALFRED JONES, M.A., F.R.Hist.S.

HOUSEHOLD vessels of pewter were carried from England by the Pilgrim Fathers and the Puritans and were regarded with as much reverence as the historic silver cup taken by John Winthrop, first Governor of Massachusetts, now one of the precious relics of the First Church in Boston. The early Dutch settlers of New Amsterdam, now New York, also took with them from Holland a quantity of pewter for their household needs.

For those families who could not afford the luxury of silver vessels, pewter was the next best thing. Durable and unbreakable, it served for all manner of purposes, sacramental and domestic: tankards for drinking, dishes and

plates for the table, which were made in vast quantities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Old family inventories and wills are fruitful sources of information regarding pewter and silver, though for the most part they are destitute of such important details as the makers' names, their past history and dates.

The earliest recorded name of a pewterer in the American Colonies is probably that of John Gay, of James City in Virginia, whose name is preserved as the witness of a murder there on January 1, 1628 ("Virginia Mag. of Hist. & Biog.," xxx, 350-1).

Pewterers were perhaps working in Massa-



FIG. 2. FLAGON, 18TH CENTURY. H. 11-IN.
(In the Krautz Creek German Reformed Church)

chusetts at the same time as the first of the silversmiths whose works have survived the disasters inevitable from objects made of precious metal, namely, Robert Sanderson (1608-93), a London settler at Boston. Indeed, there is definite evidence from official records of the names of pewterers in Boston as early as 1639-42 and 1654, in Richard Graves and Thomas Bumstead. No works from their hands have, however, been identified, nor can anything be shown of the work of the next man, one Henry Shrimpton, described as a brazier working at Boston about 1660-5, whose will mentions thousands of pounds (in weight) of pewter and "tools for pewter and brasse." Boston, as the chief town in New England in the later part of the seventeenth century, was fast becoming an important centre of silver-smithing, therefore no surprise need be expressed at the presence of members of the inferior but not unimportant craft of pewterer

working there at that time. Two names may be mentioned, though there were doubtless others. These were John Comer and Thomas Clarke, mentioned in 1678 and between 1683 and 1705, respectively.

Records of many pewterers in Massachusetts and in New England generally, in the eighteenth century, may be found in wills, old newspapers and other sources. There was Nathaniel Austin (1741-1816), of Boston, not to be confused with a silversmith of the same name. John Skinner (1722-92), pewterer of Newbury Street in that town, was a member and ensign in the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company of Massachusetts. Two more names rescued from oblivion are those of Thomas Byles, of Market Street, an apprentice of a brazier named Man; and Edward Rand,



FIG. 3. CHURCH FLAGON, DATED 1771. H. 11-IN.
(In the Collection of the late Mr. Howard Reijnsnyder)



FIG. 4. BEAKER, DATED 1768. PROBABLY DUTCH.
H. 63-in.
(In the possession of the Long Island Historical
Society, New York)

of Newburyport, Massachusetts, who in 1775 had been suspected of carrying on a "criminal correspondence" with his brother, Dr. Isaac Rand, a loyalist in the Revolution—a charge which was dismissed. At the end of the century and the beginning of the next there were Richard Austin, Thomas Badger, Andrew, Samuel and Thomas Green, Mary Jackson, one of the very few American women pewterers, Joseph Roby, and others, all of Boston.

Working at Taunton in the same State were James Danforth, bearer of a name which is not inconspicuous in the history of American pewter, who flourished about 1745; Richard Lee; and two men named Edmund Porter, before 1770. The Porter family of pewterers is represented later by two others, Lincoln and Samuel, both working at Taunton after 1770.

To these must be added the Trask family early in the nineteenth century, including Israel of Beverly, the maker of two large flagons given by Miriam F. Choate and Abigail Cogswell to Essex Congregational Church, Massachusetts. His tools are in the possession of the Beverly Historical Society, who also have some patterns for pewter spoons.

In New York there are many records of pewterers in the list of freemen, in wills and in newspaper advertisements. First among the freemen are the names of John Dewilde (1697-8) and John Eutwate (1698), both described as "pottmakers," which is only another name for pewter-pot makers. A later "potmaker" was Euvout Ewoutsen, freeman in 1718. The following is a list of pewterers, who became freemen at the dates marked against their names:—

- William Diggs, 1702.
- William Horsewell, 1705.
- Joseph Leddel, 1715-6.
- Francis Bassett, 1718.
- William Bradford, junr., 1719, died in 1759 (probably the son of the well-known printer of this name).
- John Bassett, 1732 (a man of this name was a pewterer in 1725).
- Robert Boyle, 1755.
- John Will, 1759.
- George Harner, 1761.
- Henry Will, 1765.
- William I. Elsworth, 1768.
- Frederick Bassett, 1769 (born in 1740).
- Malcolm McEuen, 1770.

Francis Bassett, pewterer, of No. 218 Pearl Street, who left a will dated 1749 (proved in 1758), was apparently the son of Francis Bassett, an apprentice for five years of the above William Horsewell, as recorded in the following interesting document:—

"Indenture of Francis Bassett, son of Francis Bassett late of this Province, with the consent of his Mother Marie Magdalen, to William Horsewell, Pewterer, and Hannah his wife if She shall Survive him and continue in the State of Widdowhood and also shall think fitt to prosecute and Carry on the Said Trade . . . as An Apprentice within the Province of New York and in no Other place for seven years from date.



FIG. 5. GROUP OF VESSELS, 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES
(In the Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey)

" . . . And the said William Horsewell and Hannah his wife doth hereby promise that in Case of Mortality of Either of them the Survivor will not for any Cause or under any pretence whatsoever without the Consent of him the Said Apprentice and such of his Relations as he the Said Apprentice shall think fit to take Advice from."

Signed, May 1st, 1706, by Frances Bassett. In the Presence of Barth. Feurt, Edward Pennant. Acknowledged April 15th, 1707, by Francis Bassett and his mother Maria Magdalen Bassett before William Peartree, Mayor ("New York Hist. Soc. Colls.," 1885, p. 619).

The above John Bassett in his will, dated 1760 and proved in 1761, left to his sons, Francis and Frederick, or either of them, his casting moulds belonging to his craft, on payment of £50. To the second of these sons he left his "vice turning hooks," wheels, blocks and all other tools (*Ibid.*, 1897, p. 51).

A long list of pewterers might be compiled from those working in New York after the Peace of 1783 between the American Colonies and England. Two emigrants to America deserve record here, namely, the Scottish

pewterers, Joseph Wilson, bound from Glasgow in 1774 at the age of 19; and Archibald Buchanan, aged 35, from Edinburgh, bound in 1775 probably for New York.

In the Federal procession in honour of the Constitution of the United States, held in New York on August 5th, 1788, the craft of the pewterer had an honoured place. The pewterers carried an orange coloured flag, on which were elegantly printed the United States colours, underneath which were the arms of the pewterers, supported by two miners, holding burning lamps in their hands; the motto was—SOLID AND PURE, in gold letters. On the front of the flag was the title, "Society of Pewterers," with the representation of a pewterer's workshop, in which the different branches were shown at work; above this were the following lines:—

The federal plan most solid and secure,
Americans their freedom will ensure;
All arts shall flourish in Columbia's land,
And all her sons join as one social band.

Among the earliest names of pewterers in Philadelphia is that of Thomas Badcock, whose will is dated 1707-8 and who appears to have been at work there somewhat earlier than the

OLD AMERICAN PEWTER

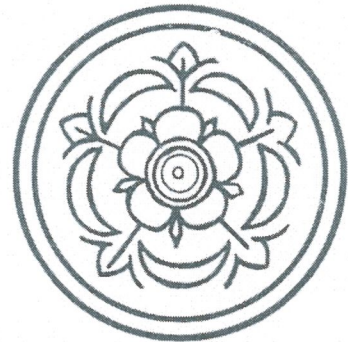


FIG. 6. TANKARD, c. 1785. H. 8½-IN.; AND TWO BEAKERS BY SAMUEL DANFORTH, OF HARTFORD, c. 1810. H. 5-IN.
(In the possession of Mr. John B. Dodd)

first of the silversmiths. Simon Edgell and James Everett were working there in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, while another name before the Revolution was that of Cornelius Bradford. The craft of the pewterer was so cherished in Philadelphia that an inn was called "Ye Pewter Platter," while it was also commemorated by "Pewter Platter Alley" before the Revolution. John Thornton, a London pewterer, emigrated there in 1774 (at the age of thirty as an indented servant (journeyman); but of his career and that of four other emigrant pewterers in 1774 and 1775 I have been unable to trace any particulars.

In the course of my examination of the old Church silver of Pennsylvania in 1912 it was instructive to see a good deal of pewter, more especially flagons of an exclusive form, in Lutheran Churches. Belonging to Trinity Lutheran Church at Lancaster in this State were two such flagons. The first stands on three feet formed of cherubs' heads and wings, and is stamped inside with a large rose, as illustrated here, and with the maker's initials, H.M. and some devices in a small shield on

the handle. It was a gift from John Weybrecht in 1733. With some hesitation I attri-



bute it to a German pewterer. The second is of similar form, but the maker's mark is composed of his initials, I.C.H., crowned, and LANCASTER, where it was evidently made by a local pewterer.



LANCASTER



FIG. 7. FLAGON BY T. D. AND S. BOARDMAN, OF HARTFORD. H. 12½ IN.; AND A PAIR OF BEAKERS BY T. BOARDMAN AND CO. H. 5½ IN. EARLY 18TH CENTURY
(In the Gallatin Reformed Church, Mount Ross, New York)

By the same unidentified maker as the last is another similar flagon in St. John's Church, Compassville, dated 1766; and a small plate in St. Michael's Church, Strassburg, both in Pennsylvania. By him also is a third flagon of the same type, 11 inches high, from Krautz Creek German Reformed Church, which has been deposited with the Presbyterian Historical Society at Philadelphia (fig. 2). There are also some more flagons of this distinctive shape by the same Lancaster maker (whose name, it is to be hoped, may be traced by antiquaries in that town), including one in the collection of the late Mr. Howard Reifsnyder, of Philadelphia (fig. 3), which is inscribed:

FOR
THE PETERS KIRCHE
IN MOUNT JOY TOWN SHIP
VON JOHN DIRR

1771.

In the course of the same visit I was privileged to examine a large number of inter-

esting old pewter vessels deposited with the Presbyterian Society just mentioned. They came not only from Churches in Pennsylvania, but also from those in other States. Some were English and some were made in Philadelphia. The latter included a tankard and flagon by William Will, about 1795; a pair of mugs by Robert Palethorp; and a plate by B. Barns of the early nineteenth century, as well as the earlier flagon already mentioned.

At Bethlehem in Pennsylvania in 1756 were single representatives of the following three crafts: silversmith, pewterer and bookbinder. Cobbett during his sojourn in the United States advocated as a measure against the prevailing vice of excessive spirit-drinking the introduction of beer. Before the end of his visit he was happy to record that beer was every day becoming more and more fashionable. At Bristol in this State he was pleased to see excellent beer in clean and nice pewter pots.

At Newport in Rhode Island were several

good pewterers, as well as silversmiths in the eighteenth century. One of the earliest recorded names is that of Lawrence Langworthy, described as a pewterer in his will of 1739, who is followed by Benjamin Day in 1751. Eight years later comes the name of John Fryers. An advertisement in the "Newport Mercury" for December 31st, 1793, needs no explanation:—

SAMUEL and THOMAS MELVILLE hereby inform the public that they carry on the Pewterers' Business, in the shop belonging to Mrs. Carr, at the corner of Ferry Wharf, in Thames Street, near the Red Market, where they make PEWTER WARE.

These names are reversed in an advertisement in the same paper for October 13th, 1800, announcing their change of address from their shop on the Hill to the Long Wharf, opposite the Brick Market.

The same name is preserved in that of David Melville, pewterer, whose estate was advertised in the same newspaper for July 28th, 1801. He had died before January 4th, 1796, the date of an announcement in the "Newport Mercury" by Thomas Melville that he carries on the business at the house and shop just above the Church on the Hill, formerly occupied by his father, David Melville, deceased. By David Melville are two porringers in the collection of Mr. Dwight Blaney, of Boston, described and illustrated later. A third porringer in the same collection is stamped with the maker's initials, T.M., believed to be those of Thomas Melville.

From odds and ends of notes collected over several years, the following pewterers in Connecticut may be included here. There was Thomas Danforth, of Middletown, whose obituary notice appeared in the "Connecticut Gazette" for August 16th, 1782. Some confusion is made between this man and the later pewterer of the same name at Philadelphia. An earlier name is mentioned in the Diary of Joshua Hempstead under date of November 25th, 1743, who notes that he was taking some pewter to Norwich, Connecticut, to be worked up for him by one Sandford. Samuel Danforth, of Hartford, was the maker of some beakers mentioned on a later page. The Boardman family was prominent early in the nineteenth century.

Just as there were working silversmiths at

Baltimore soon after the Revolution, so, too, it may be conjectured that the craft of the pewterer was also represented there. Two pewterers, Theodore Jennings, aged 40, and James Edward Smith, aged 31, emigrated from London to Maryland in 1775, but their subsequent fate is unknown.

According to the "Virginia Historical Magazine" (vii, 109), many persons had spoon-moulds and kept pewter on hand for making spoons from them. Several have been preserved in New England; in the Beverly Historical Society's rooms; in Mr. Dwight Blaney's collection; and at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the last of which is illustrated (fig. 1).

A maker of moulds for pewterers was John Cook, who emigrated from Gloucestershire to America in 1748 and settled in South Carolina. As a steadfast adherent of the Crown in the War of Independence he was obliged at the evacuation of that province by the British troops to seek refuge in his native land, where he was granted by a benevolent government the sum of £30 in 1783 to buy tools, to enable him to follow his craft as a pewterer.

One interesting set of old pewter deserves notice here whether American or English, namely, the dozen dishes of different sizes, three dozen shallow plates and one dozen spoons, provided in 1786 for the St. George's Club, organized in that year in St. George's Parish, Dorchester, South Carolina, for the encouragement of a good breed of horses ("S. Carolina Hist. & Gen. Mag.," viii, 88-94).

A few pieces of pewter have been chosen for illustration. Among them is an interesting beaker, which is included because of the attribution that it may have been made in America by a pewterer of Dutch origin. I am, however, of the opinion that it came from Holland. It is inscribed:—

WAT. GAER. IS. DRINCK. WAT. KLAER. IS.

SPREECK. WAT. WAER. IS. EEF. 1708.

The mark stamped upon it is a rose crowned, with the maker's initials, DS, within the crown. It is $6\frac{3}{4}$ -inches high and is now in the possession of the Long Island Historical Society, New York (fig. 4).

By a curious coincidence another piece of pewter bearing the same maker's mark is in America, namely, a circular plate, $9\frac{1}{8}$ -inches in diameter, which is at the Princeton Theologi-

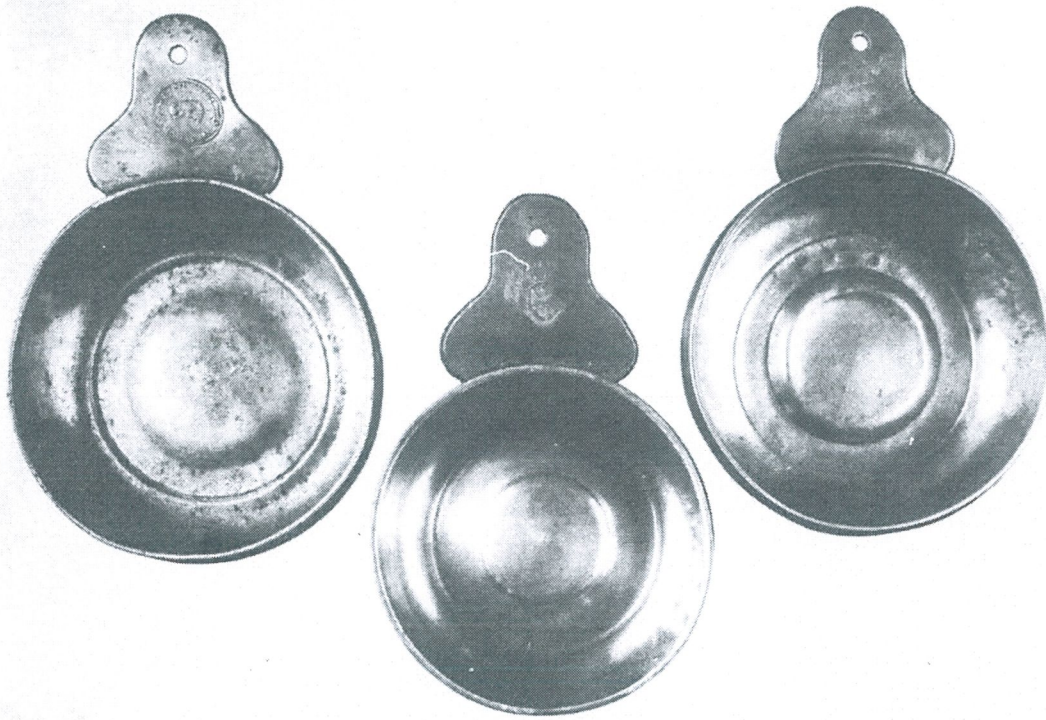


FIG. 8. THREE PORRINGERS BY PEWTERERS OF NEWPORT, R.I.: (a) BY DAVID MELVILLE (1755-93), D. 5 1/4 IN.; (b) BY THE SAME, D. 5 IN.; (c) PROBABLY BY THOMAS MELVILLE, D. 5 1/2 IN.
(In the Collection of Mr. Dwight Plancy)

cal Seminary, New Jersey, with three copies of it by the Philadelphia pewterers, C. & I. Hera, early in the nineteenth century (fig. 5). Illustrated with these four plates are two tankards of a form which was highly popular in silver in England about the middle of the eighteenth century, and was also made by American silversmiths and pewterers. No marks have been found on these tankards, nor on the four plain beakers of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, illustrated in the same group. The baptismal basin shown in this group is also American and bears a maker's mark, HALE, perhaps a New York pewterer of about 1810.

In the next group (fig. 6) are a tankard 8 1/4 inches high, bearing no marks, but undoubtedly an American copy of about 1785 of a silver tankard of fifty or sixty years earlier; and two beakers 5 inches high, stamped with the American eagle and the initials, S.D., probably for Samuel Danforth, of Hartford, Connecticut, early in the nineteenth century. The whole

service of Communion Vessels came from the old Presbyterian Church at Orange, in New Jersey, and are now in the possession of Mr. John B. Dodd, of Orange.

In another service of Sacramental vessels in pewter, belonging to Gallatin Reformed Church, Mount Ross, New York, is a specimen of the work of Henry Will, mentioned earlier as a freeman of New York in 1765, whose workshop was at No. 3, Water Street, in 1786. This is a large oval dish, 15 1/4 by 11 1/2 inches, which is stamped with several of his marks (fig. 9). In the same Church is a tall flagon of conventional form, 12 1/2 inches high, stamped with the mark of T. D. and S. Boardman, of Hartford in Connecticut, and a pair of beakers—a common form of Sacramental Cup, both in silver and pewter, in many American Churches—5 1/8 inches high, of the same date (early 19th century), by T. Boardman & Co. (fig. 7).

One interesting feature of some old Ameri-

can pewter is recalled by the mark of the letter X crowned on Henry Will's dish, which is the mark ordained by the Pewterers Company of London to be stamped on "extraordinary ware."

Hardly an inventory or will of a person of consequence is without a reference to that indispensable vessel in every American household, the porringer, which is a development from the so-called "bleeding bowl" in England and not from the English silver cup of that name. It was used for many domestic purposes in the Colonies and would seem to have been the first object in silver after spoons, which the master of the household acquired as he achieved some measure of prosperity. Two examples in pewter by David Melville (1755-93), of Newport, Rhode Island, are illustrated here, with a third, possibly by his son, Thomas Melville (see fig. 8, nos. a, b, and c), in the collection of Mr. Dwight Blaney, of Boston. It will be observed that the handles are of solid metal, except for the holes, whereas that of all the silver specimens seen by the author are pierced in several designs, inspired by those of the above-mentioned English "bleeding bowl," as it is probably mis-called. The mark on No. 1 is NEWPORT D: MELVILL, with a seated rabbit in the centre; the mark on No. 2 is MADE IN

N[EWPORT] BY D: ME[LVILL], with a palmette ornament and several trefoils below.

There are several pewter porringers in the Metropolitan Museum at New York.

The loyalist refugees who fled during the American Revolution to England carried as much of their silver, pewter and other personal belongings as they could conveniently take away in their flight, and among the objects frequently mentioned in their documents are porringers of pewter and silver. The present writer has seen several in silver in London, but has not identified one of unmistakable American workmanship in pewter, though doubtless some are extant.

For many notes on pewterers I am indebted to Mrs. Florence Paul Bergner, of the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, a zealous worker in the field of old American arts and crafts; to Mr. W. A. Dyer's book, "Early American Craftsmen," and to Mr. E. J. Gale's work, which contains a list of American pewterers from 1650-1825.

For the photographs of Church pewter I am indebted to the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and for permission to illustrate to the authorities of the Churches named. My thanks are also due to the Long Island Historical Society for the print of the beaker.

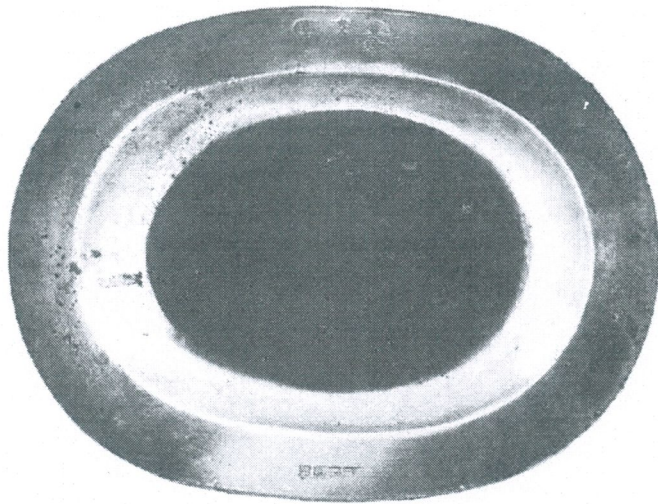


FIG. 9. DISH BY HENRY WILL, OF NEW YORK, c. 1775.
15 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ IN.
(In the Gallatin Reformed Church, Mount Ross, New York)