

The  
**PEWTER COLLECTORS CLUB**  
of AMERICA INC.

SPRING 1996

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 5

02

1701 Peter Van Gaasbech D L D

Dec <sup>r</sup> 9 <sup>th</sup> 1705	To Sundries of New Pewter	7.6.5
April 27 <sup>th</sup> 1705	To Sundries of d <sup>o</sup> - d <sup>o</sup>	10.15.6
Dec <sup>r</sup> 10 <sup>th</sup> 1707	To Sundries of d <sup>o</sup> - d <sup>o</sup>	19.13.0
May 13 <sup>th</sup>	To Sundry Spoons	1.17.0
Dec <sup>r</sup> 1 <sup>th</sup> 1708	To Sundries	3.2.0
June 7 <sup>th</sup>	To Sundries	2.3.6
Nov <sup>r</sup> 12 <sup>th</sup>	To Sundries	0.5.6
Dec <sup>r</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> 1708	To Sundry Teapots	2.3.6

Part of a page of Henry Will's account book. See the article by Donald L. Fennimore on page 145. Note entry for April 27, 1785.

Mr Peter Van Gaasbech

1705

B<sup>o</sup> of Henry Will

April 27 <sup>th</sup> 1705	10 Pint & half Teapots	5/6	£ 19. 0
	• 6 Quarts	6/6	1. 19. 0
	• 12 Tankards	6/6	3. 12. 0
	• 6 Chamber pots	6/6	1. 19. 0
	• 3 doz. Plates		
	• 12 half gall <sup>n</sup> Basins	} to 63 1/2 d 2/	6. 6. 6
	• 6 three pint d <sup>o</sup>		
			£ 10. 15. 6

Details of the April 27 transaction in the corresponding invoice from Henry Will. See the article by Stanley B. Rich on page 143.

VOLUME 11  
NUMBER 5



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## *President's Letter*

Our Spring National meeting in May in the lower Hudson Valley represented another opportunity to see, touch, and learn about forms of antique pewter that are not as familiar to us as American pewter. The Secretary of The (British) Pewter Society, John Richardson, spoke on the evolution and variety of British tavern mugs and Jan Beekhuizen, President of the Dutch Pewter Society, enlightened us on the variety of Dutch forms from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century. We learned some of the differences between Flemish and Dutch pewter as well as pewter from Northern Germany close to the Dutch border. As Americans who know the differences between New York, Connecticut, and Philadelphia pewterers, we should not be surprised at differences between Dutch, French, Flemish and North German pewter, which are all within 200 miles of each other. Discussion of pieces of Dutch pewter brought in by members was led by Jan Beekhuizen and Anton Vreede. David Kilroy did a masterful job deciphering the puzzles of our Show and Tell pewter. Our Saturday daytime visits to Van Cortlandt Manor and Phillipsburg Manor revealed a number of English and American pewter treasures among their collections. Tom Madsen choreographed the whole meeting perfectly, even to the extent of surprising the President with a huge birthday cake at the dinner on Friday evening. A fire extinguisher was held close by due to all the candles necessary to make the cake authentic. Bob and I and Marianne and Albert Phiebig thoroughly enjoyed sharing our collections with all of the attendees. We all had a great time meeting old friends and making new ones.

For those of you who like to plan trips well ahead of time, consider the possibility

of 1998 in England for the grand opening of Alex Neish's collection to be housed permanently in Stratford-on-Avon. In the immediate future, the PCCA will have its Fall National Meeting in Providence, RI, on the Columbus Day weekend, Oct. 12-14, and its Spring National Meeting in 1997 in Washington, DC, May 2-4.

As an educational, non-profit organization, we seriously consider grants-in-aid applications from people engaged in pewter research. Under the leadership of Jack Schneider, the grants-in-aid committee carefully reviews all such applications and then recommends the most worthy applications to the Board of Governors. This year, we had two outstanding requests that merited approval. Don Fennimore, Jr., Senior Curator of Metals at Winterthur, needed assistance to publish the account book of the New York pewterer, Henry Will. The account book enumerates and prices the type, quantity and variety of household, commercial, personal, and ecclesiastical wares that Henry Will made between 1763 and 1796. The other award went to Susan McGowan, Director of Adult Programs, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, MA. The PVMA has a fine pewter collection which needs to be photographed, cataloged, and made ready for a permanent exhibit. She will also publish an illustrated booklet on the most important pieces of the collection. The work of these two fine people is going to enhance the knowledge of pewter for all of us, as well as for many who are not yet members of the PCCA. We will inform the membership when these publications become available. We all owe a big thank you to Jack and his committee for their outstanding work.

In order to continue to sustain the high quality of our programs, grants-in-aid, and publications, the Board of Governors has

approved a slightly revised dues structure. For all new members joining in 1996, and commencing in January 1997 for current members, one or two adult members of one household will pay a single membership fee of \$40 per year. As long as two people are so designated on the dues payment form, both of these persons will be members of the PCCA. For some individuals, this will mean an increase of \$10. Dues have not been raised since 1980, while postage has increased enormously for the six mailings a year that all households receive.

After unanimous approval by the New York Regional Group, the New England Regional Group and the PCCA Board of Governors, the New York and the New England regional groups have merged into

### ***From the Editor and the Publisher***

There is a new and streamlined appearance to the way in which *Bulletin* references are cited in the index to Volume 10, enclosed with this issue, as well as to the way in which pages in this issue are numbered.

The month/year ('6/96') and whole-number ('Bulletin #112') designations previously used will be abandoned. Both are redundant. Each issue will be designated by its volume number, issue number within the volume, and date; that is, Spring or Fall. As before, pages will be numbered consecutively starting from 1 in each volume. This issue of the *Bulletin* is, therefore, Volume 11, Number 5, Spring 1996. It

a new regional group to be called the Northeast Regional Group.

I am pleased to announce that Don Herr, one of our past Presidents, a scholar, and author of *Pewter in Pennsylvania German Churches*, has consented to be our new Publicity Chair.

I want to thank all the officers, committee chairs, and editors of our publications for all of their hard work which continues to make the PCCA the vibrant, growing organization of which we are all so proud. We are also pleased that we are exchanging more information with fellow pewter lovers from Great Britain, Holland, and Brazil.

***Barbara Jean Horan***

contains pages 121 to 168.

We thank Dick Bowen for encouraging us to simplify and bring into conformance with conventional usage what has been an unwieldy system. We hope that this new system of numbering, while it is a continuation of the existing system, will be clearer and will assist you in the future in finding more readily those articles for which you are looking.

Thanks to all the contributors who have made it such a pleasure to put together this issue. We look forward to receiving your articles for the Fall 1996 issue of the *Bulletin*.

***Ellen and Tom O'Flaherty***

## *Charles Albert Calder, Forgotten Pioneer, and Madelaine Ray Brown, An Early Collector*

*by Richard L. Bowen, Jr.*

In the revised edition of his book *A History of American Pewter*, Charles F. Montgomery added a 25-page chapter on "The Collecting of American Pewter Before 1950."<sup>1</sup> The first eight pages are devoted to the development of the literature on American pewter up to 1924 and the early American exhibitions of pewter up to 1939. The next eleven pages describe the people who had formed major collections of American pewter. In his preface, Montgomery states that in most cases he had followed the growth of these collections and had personally known the collectors and their ways of collecting.

This chapter is welcome from several aspects. It is really the history of American pewter collecting and it is a fascinating story. Montgomery was particularly qualified to write it, as he had been a pewter dealer in his early years. Montgomery died shortly after the account was published (1978), and with the deaths of Ledlie I. Laughlin (1977), Thomas D. Williams (1980), John J. Evans (1980), and John J. Remensnyder (1981), there is no one competent to write such a history. Montgomery's personal recollections about the collectors and their collecting dates cannot be reconstructed from any published record.

Charles Montgomery was born in 1910. About 1934, only two years after he graduated from college, he became interested in pewter; he met Ledlie I. Laughlin shortly after that.<sup>2</sup> It was not until 1939 that he opened his antique shop, "At the Sign of the Tankard," in Wallingford, Connecticut, specializing in pewter. Montgomery apparently limited his comments on the people making major collections to those whom he had known. Unfortunately, because of this, he ignored several men who made substantial collections of American pewter and had given them away before he ever became interested in pewter himself. Therefore, certain statements about the gifts of collections and the details of some early collectors are not correct.

Montgomery stated that, "Mr. Garvan appears to have made the first large gift of American pewter to a public institution."<sup>3</sup> This is not correct. Francis P. Garvan gave about 250 pieces of pewter to Yale in 1930, but Eugene de Forest had given some 400 pieces of American, English, Continental and Chinese pewter to the New Haven Colony Historical Society in 1919, and Charles A. Calder's widow gave 65 pieces of American pewter her husband had collected to the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1929 as a memorial to him. Montgomery knew of de Forest and Calder, as he listed them as donors to the respective institutions in a list of 44 museums possessing collections of American pewter, but without dates.<sup>4</sup> It is strange that he did not do a little checking on them. In relation to the Garvan collection at Yale, Montgomery states that Graham Hood's *American Pewter... at Yale* (New Haven, 1965) was the first catalog of an American museum's pewter collection.<sup>5</sup> This is not true either; John M. Graham described the Brooklyn Museum's John W. Poole 246-piece pewter collection in *American Pewter* (Brooklyn Museum, 1949) over fifteen years earlier.

## *Madelaine R. Brown*

After considering Mrs. Stephen S. Fitzgerald, who started collecting pewter in the 1930's, Montgomery turned to Dr. Madelaine R. Brown, stating that she had started collecting Rhode Island pewter in the late 1920's.<sup>6</sup> However, Dr. Brown herself related that she began collecting Rhode Island pewter in the summer of 1932, only two months before she found the first pewter flatware by Josiah Keene (an 8 1/4 inch plate).<sup>7</sup> Montgomery devoted eight lines to Madelaine Brown, saying that she had bequeathed her collection of pewter to the Newport Historical Society. Actually, she left her Newport pewter (only 14 pieces) to the Newport Historical Society and her Providence pewter (31 pieces) to the Rhode Island Historical Society. Montgomery stated that the gift to the Newport Historical Society contained almost all of the known forms of Rhode Island pewter, several of which are unique. Presumably this is a reference to three lidded baluster measures marked LL and IF, originally reputed to be by Lawrence Langworthy and John Fryers, but now thought to be English.

Madelaine Ray Brown was born in Providence in 1898, a daughter of Robert Perkins and Elizabeth Graham (Ray) Brown.<sup>8</sup> She graduated from Bryn Mawr College, and received an M.A. from Brown University in 1923 and an M.D. from John Hopkins Medical School in 1927. She developed multiple sclerosis shortly after this and much later was forced to use a wheelchair. She moved to Boston in 1931 and pursued a medical career, attending patients and teaching at Harvard and Tufts. She was a well-known neurologist and became a leading authority on multiple sclerosis. She received many honors, among them Medical Woman of the Year in New England for 1957.<sup>9</sup> Regarding her ability to perform an active medical career from a wheel chair, she once said: "I'm not heroic. There are two ways of meeting this thing. One way is to go right to bed and not move out of it for the rest of your life. The other way is just to do your best." She became a familiar sight in her wheelchair in Boston hospitals and medical schools. She was killed as a passenger in an automobile accident at age 69 on June 15, 1968.

Madelaine Brown was one of the charter members of the Pewter Collectors' Club of America, organized in March 1934, and was the first treasurer, a post she held until 1949 when she became vice president. She started collecting American pewter shortly after moving to Boston. However, her interest remained predominantly with Rhode Island pewter. The pewter she bequeathed to the Rhode Island and Newport Historical Societies was supposedly all from Rhode Island. She was one of twenty-seven lenders of American pewter to the 1939 Metropolitan Museum of Art Exhibition of American Pewter in New York.<sup>10</sup> Montgomery called this "The finest exhibit of American pewter ever brought together," with some 370 marked pieces chosen for form and variety.<sup>11</sup> A plaster cast of the touch mark was placed beside each piece.

In 1959, the Rhode Island Historical Society organized an exhibition of 53 pieces of Rhode Island pewter from the collections of Madelaine R. Brown and Joseph K. Ott.<sup>12</sup> Dr. Brown had 19 pieces in the exhibit (of which 3 were not Rhode Island). Montgomery stated that these 19 pieces had been given to the Newport Historical Society.<sup>13</sup> Only 9 of these are now in either the Newport or the Rhode Island Historical Societies. However, eight of the most important are not in either. It will be useful to list these, since some of the items are unique. (The numbers refer to the catalog numbers.)

Thomas Byles. Plate: 9 inches (No. 12), L586.  
 Samuel Hamlin. Mug: quart, unique solid handle (No. 10), L332 (S H Rose).  
 Gershom Jones. Mug: pint (No. 7), L341.  
 Josiah Keene. Plate: 8 1/4 inches (No. 14), L348.  
 George Richardson. Mug: 6 inches (No. 11), Glennore marks.  
 Benjamin Day. Mug: quart (No. 8), unmarked.  
 David Melville. Plate: 6 inches (No. 3), L324.  
 Samuel Melville. Porringer: 5 inches, solid tab (No. 2), cast S M.

Madelaine Brown also possessed a teapot and a pint mug each marked G. RICHARDSON/BOSTON.<sup>14</sup> Presumably she disposed of these to concentrate on Rhode Island items. The Boston mug is unique and its whereabouts are unknown.

The pewter Madelaine Brown gave to the Rhode Island and Newport Historical Societies may be summarized. A more complete listing of the items in the Rhode Island Historical Society is found in the Appendix at the end of this article.

## **RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

### **Madelaine R. Brown Collection**

William Billings	3
William Calder	10
Samuel Hamlin	12
Gershom Jones	<u>6</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>

## **NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

### **Madelaine R. Brown Collection**

Joseph Belcher (1 piece)

Plate: 8 inches, L314.

David Melville (5 pieces)

Plates: 2 - 8 1/4 inches, L318 & L322; 9 5/8-inch smooth rim, L318 & L322.

Dish: 14 inches, L318 & L322.

Porringer: 4 1/4-inch Crown, L323.

S. & T. Melville (2 pieces)

Plate: 7 11/16 inches, L326 & L327.

Porringer: 4 1/2-inch Flower, supposedly L324 but undoubtedly L342, Gershom Jones.

T. Melville (3 pieces)

Plate: 8 13/16 inches, L324 & L329.

Porringer: Solid tab, L325.

Spoons: 7 11/16-inch Round, end, mid-rib, rat-tail, one double struck on reverse with L328; 4 unmarked similar to last. See PCCAB 4 (1962): 132 for a description of these 5 spoons which were found *en suite*.

Brass spoon mold in which above spoons were supposedly cast: Marked I A on top and I M on bottom.

English Baluster Measures (originally thought to be American) (3 pieces)

9 3/4 inch marked I F, L883. Half gallon.

3 3/8 inch marked LL, L842. Half pint.

7 1/8 inch marked LL, L842. Quart.

### *Charles A. Calder*

Montgomery failed to give an account of Charles A. Calder; obviously one should have been included. Charles Albert Calder was born in Providence on August 13, 1867, the son of Albert Lawton<sup>(5)</sup> Calder (William<sup>(4)</sup>, James<sup>(3)</sup>, William<sup>(2)</sup>, Alexander<sup>(1)</sup>) and Martha Ann (Howland) Calder.<sup>15</sup> (The numbers are the successive generations from the first immigrant to America.) On June 17, 1896 he married Alice Dyke Paige, daughter of Frederick A. and Alice B. Paige, born September 23, 1869. Charles A. Calder was thus the grandson of William Calder, the Providence pewterer, who worked in Providence from about 1820 to shortly before his death in 1856. William Calder had only been dead eleven years when Charles A. Calder was born. Two of Charles A. Calder's uncles, William Henry Calder (born 1819) and Andrew Anderson Calder (born 1823) had worked with William Calder as pewterers; they were both listed as Block Tin Workers in the 1844 and 1847 Providence *Directories*. Andrew died in 1871 but William Henry survived until 1903. They could have made some of the pewter Calder collected. Calder made reference to this latter uncle once in his article on "Rhode Island Pewterers" when discussing the pits and flecks so often seen on pewter. He said that they were not corrosion, "at least, an uncle who worked at the craft as a young man, told me that this pitting was caused by putting too much or not thoroughly mixing the antimony."<sup>16</sup> Strangely, this appears to be more of a problem with Calder britannia than with any other maker's.

Charles A. Calder graduated from Mowry and Goff's English and Classical Institute in Providence. In 1890 he became associated with his father in the manufacture of Calder's Dentine, and upon the death of his father in 1899 he succeeded him in the business.<sup>17</sup> Charles A. Calder died on January 28, 1928. There was no obituary in the local papers, only a short notice that he had died suddenly and was the husband of Alice D. P. Calder.<sup>18</sup> Alice survived him almost a quarter of a century, dying on October 19, 1951. A short notice appeared in *Antiques* in April, 1928: "The Attic sorrowfully records the sudden death of Charles A. Calder, author of *Rhode Island Pewterers* and of a number of brief papers in amplification of that valuable little book. Mr. Calder was a careful, accurate, and industrious student and collector, not only of pewter but of other manifestations of early American craftsmanship. His knowledge of such things was both wide and profound. Yet he harbored no selfish pride of superior understanding. The sources of his information he kept generously open; his good counsel—always modestly given—was at the disposal of friend and stranger alike."<sup>19</sup>

An effort was made to obtain a photograph of Charles A. Calder. The Rhode Island Historical Society does not have one. A search was made for descendants of Charles A. and Alice Calder. The births and deaths of Charles and Alice are all found in the Providence vital



records. However, no births or deaths of any children to them are found. It has to be assumed that they were childless and therefore left no descendants. This leaves no prospect for locating a photograph.

Montgomery briefly mentioned Charles A. Calder as one of the many collectors from whom Henry Francis du Pont had purchased William Will pewter, noting that he was "a descendant of William Calder and a pioneer Providence, Rhode Island, collector who was actively collecting before 1920."<sup>20</sup> However, from a chronological point of view it does not seem possible that Charles Calder ever sold Henry Francis du Pont any William Will pewter. Montgomery noted that Mr. du Pont only started collecting pewter in 1923, and that by 1939 had an "excellent small collection," putting 11 pieces in the Metropolitan exhibition that year.<sup>21</sup> He identified the 11 pieces, only one of which was by William Will (a 16 3/8-inch dish). Montgomery then states that it was only after this (1939) that Mr. du Pont started to collect William Will pewter, taking 25 years to accumulate the 37 pieces now at Winterthur. Since Charles Calder died in 1928, du Pont could not have purchased any William Will pewter from him. This is substantiated by the records at the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum. Donald L. Fennimore kindly checked the Registrar's Office and the archives and found no mention of Charles Calder.<sup>22</sup> He also checked Mr. du Pont's chronological purchase books from 1922 through 1928 and found no reference to Charles Calder or to William Will pewter.<sup>23</sup>

While Calder apparently never had any William Will pewter, he did have a more remarkable piece of Will pewter: a John Will 8 1/4-inch plate with a hammered booge. In 1926, Calder published some additional notes on Rhode Island pewterers.<sup>24</sup> He concluded by noting that he had strayed from the strictly straight and narrow Rhode Island trail and had gathered a few examples from outside the area which he would describe. These were a 6-inch Semper Eadem basin, 8-inch basins by Richard Austin, Thomas Badger and Samuel Pierce, a little R. Lee porringer, an 8 3/4-inch smooth brim plate and a 14 1/2-inch dish by John Skinner, and an 8 1/4-inch plate by John Will. He noted that the last three were all hammered, "something rather exceptional in American pewter." He published the marks on the Will plate: two angel touches with IW (presumably the earliest John Will mark) and a full name JOHN \* WILL mark below, and noted that this was "a bit problematical as yet." Laughlin illustrated a photograph of the marks as L482 and L483.<sup>25</sup> He gave as credit "The Collection of Mrs. Charles A. Calder." I had always thought that this meant that the photograph had been supplied by Mrs. Calder, since one might assume that all of Calder's pewter was given to the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1929.

When I was in correspondence with Donald L. Fennimore regarding the William Will pewter reputedly sold by Calder to du Pont, I furnished information on October 3, 1988 on the 8 1/4-inch John Will plate Calder had once had, thinking that this was possibly the Will pewter which Montgomery said Calder sold to du Pont. He replied that Winterthur did not have any John Will pewter. On December 6, 1988 he wrote me that he had recently visited the Brooklyn Museum to conduct a pewter workshop. He had spent considerable time with the pewter collection and discovered a John Will plate in storage which he believed was the one Calder had.

The Brooklyn Museum supplied a photograph of the marks on the plate (8 5/16 inches) which had been acquired with the John W. Poole collection in 1945 (Figure 1). This photograph and the ones published by Calder and Laughlin show the same plate, as indicated by a long scratch which runs vertically between the W and I of WILL. John Poole did not start collecting pewter until the mid-1930's and he sold his collection to the Brooklyn Museum in 1945.<sup>26</sup> Poole had to have acquired Calder's John Will plate between these dates, so Mrs. Calder did own the plate before Poole acquired it. Of the eight non-Rhode Island pieces Calder mentioned in his 1926 article, only one (the 8-inch Badger basin) was given to the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1929. Mrs. Calder apparently kept the rest and later disposed of them. The John Will plate was undoubtedly the most valuable piece of pewter Calder had acquired.



Figure 1. Marks on an 8 5/16-inch plate by John Will showing the circular IW mark with a winged angel holding a pair of scales and a sword, possibly made in Germany. The plate was originally collected by Charles A. Calder and acquired from his wife by John W. Poole. (Courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum, Accession No. 45.10.145.)

Louis G. Myers published his *Notes on American Pewterers* in 1926 and showed the marks on a plate consisting of two IN NEW YORK/ship touches at the top, and two rose and crown marks with IW at the bottom with a circular IW mark in the middle. Myers deduced that the IW stood for John Will of New York, since he had previously found documentary evidence for a John Will in New York from 1759 to 1762.<sup>27</sup> Myers did not give the plate size, but it is now in the Garvan collection at Yale.<sup>28</sup> The plate is 9 1/8 inches in diameter with a hammered booge. Strangely, Myers' illustration of the marks is far superior to either Laughlin's or Hood's. Laughlin said that Myers was the first to find an example of John Will's pewter, and that at almost the same time Charles A. Calder found a John Will plate with a different set of marks.<sup>29</sup> Actually, both finds were reported simultaneously in 1926, and since Calder's was published in April he may have had priority over Myers. This is another example of the failure to give Calder his due credit.

Alice Calder presented Charles A. Calder's collection of Rhode Island and neighboring pewter to the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1929. The gift received excellent press coverage. A large photograph showing the complete collection (Figure 2) and almost a full page (Figure 3) devoted to the significance of the collection were published in the *Providence Sunday Journal* on June 16, 1929. Howard M. Chapin, secretary of the Rhode Island Historical Society, was quoted as saying that, "The great opportunity still open to collectors and historians in throwing new light on industrial and commercial history is illustrated by the Charles A. Calder collection of Rhode Island pewter. In the Calder collection we have a collection which illustrates the history of pewter manufacture in Rhode Island. It is a collection of great value for this reason." The collection had been presented to the Society well before June 1929, as a specially built case had been made to house the collection. The collection remained in this case until part of it was moved to another permanent display on the third floor of the John Brown House about 1975.

The Calder collection did not contain any great pieces to compare with those that Louis G. Myers, Francis P. Garvan or Henry Francis du Pont had collected. But then Rhode Island did not produce any tankards or Federal coffee pots, and its only communion ware was produced by William Calder. However, the *Providence Journal* account pointed out that, "A portion of the collection now on exhibition at the Society, when shown at the Twentieth Century Club exhibition in Boston in 1925, was described as one of the three finest collections of marked American pewter in existence. Dealing as it did, largely with the development of pewter in one state, it was declared to be of unusual interest and importance." This was a rather positive contemporary appraisal. In discussing the Twentieth Century Club exhibition, Montgomery does not mention Calder as an exhibitor, although he mentions seven others.<sup>30</sup>



Figure 2. The Calder collection as originally exhibited in 1929.

# History Told in Pewter

## Calder Collection, Recent Memorial Gift to Rhode Island Historical Society, Shows Development of Ware Here

**T**HE great opportunity still open to collectors and historians in throwing new light on industrial and commercial history is illustrated by the Charles A. Calder collection of Rhode Island pewter. This is the bequest of Howard M. Chapin, secretary of the Rhode Island Historical Society, which has just received the Calder collection as a memorial.

"The Calder collection is more than a collection made to please the individual," he explained. "Most collections are limited either by the desire of the collector to obtain only certain characteristics which please his or her individual taste, or by the limitations enforced by the pocketbook.

"But in the Calder collection we have a collection which illustrates the history of pewter manufacture in Rhode Island. The pieces have been gathered with this object in mind. The finest examples of each craftsman's work have been selected. It is a collection of great value to the State for this reason.

"There is still a great opportunity today for the man or woman who will make a real study of some one of the many almost forgotten forms of Rhode Island craftsmanship and apply this knowledge in making a collection which will show its history just as the late Mr. Calder did with this pewter," Mr. Chapin concluded.

Mr. Calder, before his death last year, had achieved a wide reputation both as a historian and as a collector, concerning his one interest, pewter. Following his death the magazine "Antiques" described Mr. Calder as "a careful, accurate and industrious student and collector, not only of pewter, but of other manifestations of early American crafts-



*Pewter communion service formerly used by Smith Hill Baptist Church*

*In the Charles A. Calder Memorial Collection of Rhode Island Pewter presented to the Rhode Island Historical Society*

The Calder collection provided a number of firsts. It was probably the first permanent public exhibit of American pewter, and undoubtedly the first specifically concentrating on a limited geographic region. The *Providence Journal* account gives the impression that the pewter was completely Rhode Island. However, a look at the accession cards for the 65 pieces donated shows that quite a few pieces of Connecticut and Massachusetts pewter were included. This is shown by a summary by area of Calder's pewter in the Rhode Island Historical Society. (A description of the individual pieces is found in the Appendix.)

**RHODE ISLAND**

William Billings	1
William Calder	22
Samuel Hamlin	10
David Melville	2
George Richardson	<u>4</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>

<b>MASSACHUSETTS</b>	7
<b>CONNECTICUT</b>	10
<b>MAINE AND VERMONT</b>	3
<b>MISC. (Unmarked, etc.)</b>	<u>6</u>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>65</b>

Without doubt, Calder's collection established a record in the speed with which it became a permanent exhibit. This was undoubtedly due to the efforts of Howard M. Chapin of the Rhode Island Historical Society. At that time he was officially the Secretary of the Society. But he was also the librarian, the curator of the collections, and for a long time in charge of the physical assets of the Society (i.e., director). He was also a scholar, having written extensively on a number of Rhode Island topics. The Calder collection in a sense typified the goals of the Society: to preserve the history of the State. Here a collection preserved typical examples of almost all of the Rhode Island craftsmen working in a particular medium.

The speed with which the Calder collection was installed in a permanent exhibit contrasts vividly with other collections given to institutions. Possibly the extreme example is illustrated by Francis P. Garvan's gift of several hundred pieces of rare pewter to Yale University in 1930. Except for 130 pieces of pewter on long-term loan to several institutions, the bulk of the pewter remained in storage for more than four decades.<sup>31</sup> This was caused by several factors: limited space for exhibition and a lack of interest by the curators. Montgomery became curator of Garvan and Related Collections in 1970. Montgomery was the first curator for whom pewter was an overriding passion rather than a secondary interest. In fact, pewter was the conduit by which Montgomery first became interested in American decorative arts. By 1973, Montgomery had a small display case for pewter on display with only 54 pieces, with objects first grouped by form and then arranged to illustrate Montgomery's teaching ideas.<sup>32</sup> The case is not much larger than the original Calder case at the Rhode Island Historical Society.

The collecting world in 1929 was much different than it is now so far as pewter goes. There were a limited number of collectors, and many of these were avid and wealthy. Throw in the flamboyant John Barrett Kerfoot of Freehold, New Jersey, who was catering to each collector's needs, and we have open communication within a close-knit group. The press account of Mrs. Calder's gift certainly found its way to Garvan and the other prominent collectors. All must have been impressed with the historical importance that a collection of pewter could have. One would have to wonder what effect this had on Garvan's purchase of 375 pieces from Myers' great collection only two weeks later (July 1, 1929) and his subsequent gift to Yale the following year.

Montgomery suggested that Myers "sold much, if not all, of his pewter collection" to Garvan.<sup>33</sup> However, Myers apparently retained much common pewter, and some not so common, for on April 8, 1932 the American Art Association, Anderson Galleries in New York auctioned 142 pieces of Myers' pewter in 68 lots, including a pair of chalices and flagon by Timothy Brigden and a magnificent tall (14 inch) teapot by William Will with six bands of beading. These four items were the only ones illustrated. It is difficult to believe that Garvan would have passed up the last piece. However, Barquist noted that with the onset of the Depression Garvan had diminished resources, and in 1930, despite his love of tankards, he passed up one by William Kirby when it was offered to him for \$1,250.<sup>34</sup>

### *Early Literature on American Pewter*

In the notes on the development of the literature on American pewter in his chapter on "The Collecting of American Pewter," Montgomery points out that interest in pewter started about 1900 and a number of articles in magazines and sections in books appeared from this time up to 1910. N. Hudson Moore's *Old Pewter, Brass, Copper, and Sheffield Plate* (1905) contained a list of 33 American pewterers. In connection with an exhibition of pewter arranged by the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut in 1923 a list of 151 American pewterers was published. Montgomery stops his literature survey with J. B. Kerfoot's *American Pewter* (Boston, 1924), which he says was published in November 1924.<sup>35</sup>

Kerfoot's work was certainly the quantum step in the literature of American pewter. His book had a most profound effect on the development of collecting American pewter, and it is still referred to today, over seventy years later. However, in July 1924, four months before Kerfoot's book, a 23-page article by Charles A. Calder on "Rhode Island Pewterers" appeared in the Rhode Island *Historical Society Collections*. Shortly afterwards, this was reprinted as a book with the addition of 15 pages for a total of 38 pages under the same title and 1924 date. Added were two pages of text, eight pages of illustrations and a five-page list of 159 American pewterers. Calder had discovered documentary evidence for seven Providence and six Newport pewterers. He found examples of all the Providence workers except Josiah Keene, for whom Madelaine Brown found a plate in 1933. Of the six Newport pewterers, Calder did not find any examples for Benjamin Day, John Fryers or S. & T. Melville. The only Rhode Island pewterer Calder missed was Lawrence Langworthy of Newport, whom Madelaine Brown identified in 1939.<sup>36</sup> Montgomery made no mention of

Calder's publications on Rhode Island pewterers, although they were well within his time frame (four months before Kerfoot).

Calder told how he started to collect Rhode Island pewter in his introductory comments. "For some time it has been borne in upon me, that the writers on American pewter have given but scant space to Rhode Island pewterers, in fact many are not even mentioned, and so, awakened by the gift of an exceptionally graceful tea-pot, and with the assistance of several kindly souls—librarians—I took up the trail to place them on record. . . . I was . . . much interested to locate a Newport pewterer . . . for I had never seen the touch mark of a Newport pewterer, nor was there mention of one in the books . . . And now, having blazed the trail, I will set down the results of the journey."<sup>37</sup>

Calder relied mainly on contemporary newspaper advertisements, and he must have read hundreds of old Rhode Island papers to glean the twenty or so advertisements of pewterers from 1763 to 1811. He also searched old deeds and various manuscripts, for some of which he did not give any references. Some of these can be identified. For instance, Calder's statement that Joseph Belcher moved to Warren, Rhode Island (not Warren, Massachusetts, as Myers stated) in 1776 is based on the fact that he is found in a manuscript Rhode Island census of that date under Warren.<sup>38</sup>

Two years after Calder published his *Rhode Island Pewterers*, Louis G. Myers published *Some Notes on American Pewterers* (New York, 1926). Myers had great respect for Calder's work. In his forward, he devoted over a page to discussing facts Calder had disclosed about Rhode Island pewterers. He even suggested that Calder's work might show a certain superficiality about Kerfoot's book. On page 49, Myers said that, "Mr. Calder produces Josiah Keene from his magic bag," and he proceeded to illustrate a flower handle porringer undoubtedly made by Keene with the I•K in a sunburst mark. On pages 58-60, he quoted extensively from Calder in relation to the Melvilles. In his book (p. 29), Calder had suggested that someone should trace the many Danforth pewterers; both Calder and Kerfoot listed the same seven Danforths. Myers rose to Calder's challenge with a comprehensive 18-page chapter on "The Ten Danforths," a quarter of the space devoted to all pewterers. Myers added three Danforths and showed the relationships of all from the Danforth genealogy.

Charles Calder's little volume is important from a number of aspects. It is the first monograph on American pewter, having been published a few months before Kerfoot's book. Obviously both works were in preparation at the same time. It is also the first study of regional pewter. The next regional study was John Carl Thomas' *Connecticut Pewter and Pewterers* (Hartford, 1976), 52 years later. Laughlin divided his *Pewter in America* (1940) into regional groupings, but this was obviously the logical treatment of the subject. Calder's work is certainly the first scholarly work on American pewter where the research went further than the city directories, working with other documentary records. It is also the first study where virtually all of the pewterers in an area were located from the record. The work of some was only discovered later. Charles A. Calder deserves credit for being the pioneering scholar in American pewter research, followed closely by Louis G. Myers, who was first to use probate records showing the inventories of pewterers at the time of death.



# APPENDIX

## Pewter in the Rhode Island Historical Society

### 1. Charles A. Calder Memorial Collection. (Presented in 1929; Nos. 1-65 with Nos. 58-65 missing.)

#### RHODE ISLAND (39 pieces)

##### William Billings

Dish: 14 3/4-inch (No. 11), L347.

##### William Calder (22 pieces, 2 missing)

Plates: 8-inch (No. 7), L350; 8 1/4-inch (No. 54), L350; No. 59 missing.

Dishes: 10 1/4-inch (No. 6), L351; 10 1/4-inch (No. 33), L350; 10 3/8-inch (No. 18), L351.

Basin: 8-inch (No. 34), L350.

Porringers: 4 1/4-inch (No. 23), L350; 4 - 5 1/4-inch (Nos. 19-22), L350; No. 62 missing.

Lamps: 3 3/4-inch saucer base (No. 32), L351; 2 - 8-inch with candle bobèche (Nos. 26 & 27), L351 & "14."

Teapots: 7 1/2-inch pear-shaped (No. 47), L350; 8 1/4-inch (No. 45), L351 & "13/PROVIDENCE." (PCCAB, 7 [1979]: 375.)

Coffee pot: 11 3/4-inch lighthouse (No. 46), L350. (PCCAB, 7 [1979]: 376.)

Flagon: 11-inch (No. 51), L351, engraved "Smith's Hill Baptist Church, Constituted May 20, 1947." (PCCAB, 7 [1979]: 379.) A set *en suite* with chalices Nos. 52 & 53 and one dish, either No. 6 or 18.

Chalices: 2 - 6-inch (Nos. 52 & 53), unmarked, with flagon No. 51.

##### Samuel Hamlin (10 pieces, 3 missing)

Plates: 2 - 8-inch (Nos. 4 & 5), L330 & L331.

Dishes: 11 1/2-inch (No. 15), L330; 15-inch (No. 10), L330 & L331.

Basin: 8-inch (No. 35), L330.

Porringers: 5 1/4-inch flower handle (No. 25), L334; 2 - Nos. 63 & 64 missing.

Mugs: 4 1/4-inch pint (No. 57), L330; quart (No. 65) missing.

##### David Melville (2 pieces).

Plate: 8 1/4-inch (No. 2), actual basis for L318b & L324.

Dish: 14-inch (No. 13), L318 & L322.

##### George Richardson (4 pieces)

Mug: 4 1/4-inch pint (No. 44), Glennore marks.

Teapots: 6 1/2-inch (No. 43), Glennore marks and "No. 3;" 2 - 10-inch (Nos. 41 & 42), G. RICHARDSON and "C" and "No. C" respectively.

#### MASSACHUSETTS (7 pieces)

Thomas Badger. Plate: 7 1/2 inches (No. 3); Dish: 15 inches (No. 14), L309;

Basin: 8 inches (No. 37), L309.

Roswell Gleason. Lamps: 6 1/4-inch acorn font (No. 28); 6 1/4-inch lozenge font (No. 29).

James H. Putnam. 11-inch flagon (No. 49).  
Smith & Co. Lamp: 6 1/4-inch acorn font (No. 31).

**CONNECTICUT (10 pieces)**

Plates: 7 3/4-inch T. D. Boardman (No. 1), L424; 8-inch William Danforth (No. 8), L392;  
8-inch Samuel Danforth (No. 9), L397 & L400.  
Dishes: 11-inch Samuel Danforth (No. 16), L403; 13 1/4-inch Joseph Danforth (No. 12),  
L377 & L378; 13 1/4-inch Thomas Danforth (No. 17), L362.  
Basins: 8-inch Thomas Danforth (No. 38), L368; 8-inch Samuel Danforth (No. 39); 8-  
inch William Danforth (No. 40), L392.  
Teapot: 6 3/4-inch T. D. Boardman (No. 50), L433 and "No. 3."

**MAINE AND VERMONT (3 pieces)**

Richard Lee. 8-inch basin (No. 36), L410.  
Rufus Dunham. 6-inch saucer base lamp (No. 30).  
Allen Porter. 7 1/2-inch teapot (No. 48).

**MISCELLANEOUS (6 pieces, 3 missing)**

Porringer: 5 1/4-inch flower handle (No. 24), unmarked.  
Beakers: 2 - 3-inch flared top (Nos. 55 & 56), unmarked.  
Missing: 2 - plates (Nos. 58 & 60) and 1 - dish (No. 61).

**2. Madelaine R. Brown Collection. (Bequeathed in 1968; Nos 1-31.)**

**William Billings (3 pieces)**

Plate: 8 1/4-inch (No. 6), L347.  
Dish: 11 1/4-inch (No. 12), L347.  
Porringer: 5 1/4-inch flower handle (No. 20), L346.

**William Calder (10 pieces)**

Plates: 8-inch (No. 1), L350; 8 1/4-inch (No. 5), L350.  
Dish: 10 3/8-inch (No. 9), L351.  
Porringer: 4 1/4-inch flower handle (No. 21), L350.  
Mug: 6-inch quart (No. 28), L350.  
Handled beaker: 3 1/4-inch (No. 23), L351.  
Coffee pot: 11 1/2-inch lighthouse (No. 25), L350. (PCCAB, 7 [1979]:376.)  
Lamps: 3 1/4-inch saucer base (No. 22), L351; 8 3/4-inch cylindrical font (No. 26),  
L351.  
Castor set: 8 3/4 inches with 5 bottles (No. 27), L351.

**Samuel Hamlin (12 pieces)**

Plates: 8 1/8-inch (No. 7), L331 and basis for L843 (rose and crown); 9 1/4-inch  
smooth brim (No. 8), L330 & L331.  
Dishes: 11 1/2-inch with unusual reeding on underside of rim (No. 11), basis for  
L844 (This mark is undoubtedly spurious, as it has been found on a plate  
with a Samuel Ellis mark. See PCCAB 7 [1976]: 145.); 13 1/2-inch semi-  
deep (No. 13), L330 & L331; 14 3/4-inch deep (No. 14), L330 & L331.

Basin: 5 3/4-inch (No. 16), L330.

Porringers: 4-inch modified Old English handle (No. 17), L337; 5 1/4-inch flower handle (No. 19), L332; 5 1/4-inch (No. 18), L337; 5 1/4-inch (No. 24), L334.

Mugs: 4 1/4-inch pint (No. 30), L330, L331 & L337; 6-inch quart (No. 29), L330 & L331.

Gershom Jones (6 pieces)

Plates: 8 1/4-inch (No. 4), L339 & L340; 8 1/4-inch (No. 2), L342, L343 & L344; 9 1/8-inch smooth brim (No. 3), L342, L343 & L344.

Dishes: 11 1/2-inch semi-deep (No. 10), L342, L343, L344 & L345; 15-inch deep (No. 15), L339 & L340.

Mug: 5 7/8-inch quart (No. 31), L343.

### **3. Other Rhode Island Pewter (10 pieces). (The dates here and in the following sections indicate the dates acquired.)**

Samuel Hamlin

Plate: 9 1/4-inch smooth brim (1931), L330 & L333.

Dishes: 11 1/4-inch (1931), L330 & L331; 13 1/2-inch (1972).

Porringer: 4-inch modified Old English handle (1931), L 334.

David Melville

Plates: 8-inch (1972), L317 (boar) & L324 (anchor); 8 1/4-inch (1931), mutilated, but one of Melville's sizes; 8 1/8-inch (1987).

S. & T. Melville

Plate: 7 3/4-inch (1931), L326 & L327.

George Richardson

Teapots: 6 3/4-inch (1931), No. 3; no details (1961).

### **4. Communion Services (English and American) from Rhode Island Churches (13 pieces)**

Newman Congregational Church (founded in 1643), East Providence, Rhode Island (formerly Rehoboth, Massachusetts) (1957)

Flagons: 11 1/2-inch tulip-shaped with lidded spout (No. 2), unidentified English hallmarks, engraved "The Gift of Mrs. Susan Bishop to the Church of Rehoboth 1727;" 13-inch straight sided (No. 1), John Shorey, London, engraved "The Gift of Mr. Francis Stephens to the First Church of Christ in Rehoboth, 1732."

Mug: tulip-shaped (No. 3), New England, 1780-1820.

Beakers: 2 - 3-inch, one with handle (No. 4) and one without handle (No. 5), New England.

Newman Congregational Church (as above) (1967).

Flagon: 11 3/4-inch pear-shaped, Continental, crown and three X's, inscribed "The Gift of Mrs. Sarah Bishop to the Church of Rehoboth."

Baptist Church, East Greenwich, Rhode Island, property of Deacon Richard Spencer (1957).

Chalice: 6-inch (No. 2), attributed to William Calder.

Dish: 10 1/4-inch (No. 1), William Calder, L351.

Lamps: 2 - 6 1/8-inch (Nos. 3 & 4), unmarked.

Liberty Baptist Church, formerly of Hesp's Corner, Exeter, Rhode Island: First Communion Service (1951).

Flagon: 11-inch (No. 1), William Calder, L351.

Chalice: 6-inch (No. 2), unmarked but attributed to Calder.

Dish: 10 1/4-inch (No. 3), Calder, L351.

## 5. Miscellaneous American Pewter (12 items)

I.B. (attributed to John Baker, Boston)

Dish: 16 1/2-inch (1975). (See PCCAB, 7 [1976]: 86-92 for a discussion of this dish.)

Roswell Gleason

Flagon: 11-inch (1931).

Thomas Danforth

Dish: 13-inch (1931), L363.

Simeon Stedman, attributed

Ladle: 14 inches long with 3 1/2-inch diameter bowl (1931), unmarked.

Porringers: 4 1/4-inch crown handle, cast IC on back (1931), New England; 5 1/2-inch flower handle (1987), unmarked, but undoubtedly Rhode Island.

Tankard: 8-inch tulip-shaped (1931), T S on inside bottom, L595, New England.

Lamps (unmarked): 3 3/4-inch saucer base (1931); 6 1/2-inch double bulls-eye (1931); 7 3/4-inch lard oil (1931), attributed to Meriden Britannia Company.

Toy Castor Set: with 4 bottles (1962), attributed to Meriden Britannia Company.

Toy Tea Service: teapot, creamer, sugar and slop bowl with 6 cups, saucers and spoons (1962)

## 6. English Pewter (24 pieces)

Plates: 5 - 8 3/4-inch (1931, Nos 25-29), undeciphered mark, belonging to Marie Tourtellot with 14 1/2-inch dish (1931, No. 30); 9 1/4-inch (1928), unmarked, belonged to General Nathaniel Greene; 9 1/2-inch (1931), unidentified marks, presentation inscriptions; 2 - 9 1/4-inch smooth brim (1931 & 1941), Francis Piggott, inscribed A/IA for Jonathan and Abigail Arnold married in 1739; 9 3/4-inch (1931), undeciphered marks; 9 7/8-inch (1931), John Hom\_\_.

Dishes: 13 1/2-inch (1929), "Made in London" and unidentified marks; 14 1/2-inch (1931, No. 30), undeciphered mark, belonging to Marie Tourtellot with plates (1931, Nos. 25-29); 16 1/2-inch (1971), "London" with 4 unidentified marks; 18-inch (1931), Richard King.

Porringer: 4-inch dolphin handle (1931), Joseph Collier, London, c. 1670, very important, from Indian grave of Princess Ninigret in Rhode Island (PCCAB, 3 [1953]: 28).

Mug: 6 3/8-inch tulip-shaped (1967), marked TS.

Measures, lidded baluster: 5 1/2-inch (1967) and 6 1/4-inch (1931), both unmarked and both stamped P/CB on lid.

Teapots, Dixon & Son(s): boat-shaped (1931 & 1956); 6 3/4-inch globular (1931); 2 - 10 1/2-inch (1956).

## 7. Miscellaneous Pewter, Unmarked (29 pieces)

Plates: 9 1/4-inch smooth brim (1931); 9 3/4-inch (1967).

Dish: 12-inch (1931), MC stamped on rim.

Basin: 9-inch (1936), B/IF stamped on side for Jonathan and Freelove Brayton married in 1763.

Beakers: 2 3/4-inch handled (1967); 3-inch (1967); 2 - 5 1/4-inch (1931).

Chalices: 2 - 6 3/8-inch (1931).

Mug: 4 3/8-inch pint (1931), double C handle.

Tea caddy: 3 5/8-inch (1931), Chinese?

Inkwell: 1 7/8-inch square (1938), inscribed "NC 1767" for Nancy Carder.

Spoon Molds: 4 bronze, 7 7/8 inches long (1892 & 1931).

Spoons: 2 - 7 5/8-inch fit two molds (1882); 7 3/8-inch (1931); 8-inch (1976), Pat. Feb. 16, '81.

Button Molds: 5 3/4 inches long (1931); 6 1/4 inches long (1931).

Buttons: 4 (1902, 1923 & 1931).

Sash Weights, Lead: 5 1/2 inches long (1931), inscribed "1794;" 6 1/2 inches long (1931), "1773."

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35. Montgomery, 207.
36. Madelaine R. Brown, "Work of Lawrence Langworthy," RIHSC 32 (1939): 56-60.
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## *Sold by Henry Will, but Also Made by Henry Will?*

*by Stanley B. Rich*

Perhaps some of our members have had the same experience as I have when, after purchasing a book, monograph or retrospective on pewter, I read it through completely, put it on the shelf and, several months later, reread it. I am both chagrined and amazed to find how much had not registered the first time. Not only did the second reading produce 'new and valuable information,' but also the third, fourth, fifth, etc., likewise added more insight. So much for immediate absorption qualities in my brain.

But the point of this article is that you can look at a piece of material for thirteen years and only then get a flash of inspiration and ask yourself questions for which you have no answer. Take a look at the copy of Henry Will's invoice dated April 27, 1785, which I purchased August 19, 1982, and which has hung under glass in my den since acquisition.

Mr. Peter van Gaasbeck, a merchant from Kingston, New York, purchased from Henry Will 18 pint-and-a-half teapots, 6 quart teapots, 12 tankards, 6 chamber potts, 3 dozen plates, 12 half-gallon basons and 6 three-pint basons. The prices were in English currency (real money, since

the American dollar was still not considered worth much). Although the first four items were priced individually, the latter three were priced together by weight. Examples of these three items are known.

This sale obviously took place after Henry had moved back to New York City from Albany in 1784. Henry is renowned for having made many unusual forms. How, then, is it possible that no published records exist detailing an example of his pint-and-a-half teapot, his quart teapot or his chamber pott? After all, these are not uncommon forms, especially for one as talented as Henry Will.

By coincidence, these last three forms were all made by William Will. If Henry did indeed make them, would they have been similar or almost identical? And, as has been suggested to me by Ron Chambers, could he possibly have sold some of his brother's items as the occasion demanded?

I would very greatly appreciate hearing from anyone who can offer information to solve these questions, and extend our visual store of knowledge of the legacy of Henry Will.

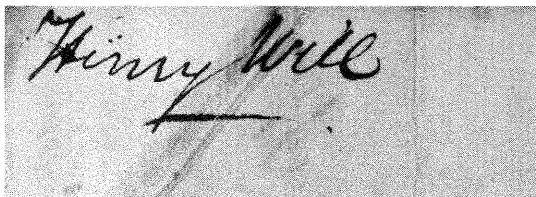


Figure 1. The signature of Henry Will on the reverse side of the invoice reproduced in Figure 2.





# *Pages From Henry Will's Account Book*

*by Donald L. Fennimore*

In 1995, the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum acquired Henry Will's account book. It is a substantial document, consisting of 243 manuscript pages plus a separate 23-page index, bound in vellum covered boards. In it Henry enumerated many business transactions, principally involving the sale of pewter, from 1763 to 1796. Plans are underway to publish the book in its entirety in facsimile. As the only eighteenth-century American pewterer's account book known, its publication will provide invaluable insight into our further understanding of the craft and the men who practiced it.

As coincidence would have it, Stanley B. Rich has published in this *Bulletin* a most interesting bill in his possession that originated in Will's shop. It was executed on April 27th, 1785, to Peter van Gaasbeck. Mr. Rich suggested that it would be helpful to publish the account book pages associated with it; I fully agree and include them herewith.

As will be seen in the accompanying images from the account book, Henry Will devoted page 82 to Peter van Gaasbeck in a running account from December 9, 1784 to September 17, 1790. The account consists

of two columns, one for debits and the other for credits; together they enumerate in broad terms transactions between the two men. Since the account book was intended for his eyes only, he did not need to go into as full detail as he did with the bill itself. Consequently, the account book entry for April 27 simply lists a sundry of new pewter sold to van Gaasbeck for £18.15.6. Without the bill, we could only guess what the individual objects were.

Interestingly, van Gaasbeck paid only £6.19.5 against the purchase, the balance presumably being handled as a credit. That credit could have been owed by Will to van Gaasbeck from a previous transaction, or Will could have extended credit to van Gaasbeck, to be paid at some point in the future. As evidenced by the credit side of the account, that debt could have been paid in cash, old pewter, butter or apples.

I hope to publish the account book in its entirety by the end of 1996. Toward that end, I am accumulating as much information as I can on Will and his extant pewter. I will be grateful to know of any pewter or information about Will that will aid in this project.

02

1704 Peter Van Gaasbeek D L D

Decem <sup>r</sup> 9 <sup>o</sup>	To Sundry's of New Nuster	7.6.5
1705	April 27 <sup>th</sup> To Sundry's of d <sup>o</sup> - d <sup>o</sup>	10.15.6
Dec <sup>r</sup> 10 <sup>o</sup>	To Sundries of d <sup>o</sup> - d <sup>o</sup>	19.13.0
1707	May 13 <sup>o</sup> To Sundry Spoons	1.17.0
Dec <sup>r</sup> 1 <sup>o</sup>	To Sundries - - - - -	3.0.0
1708	June 7 <sup>th</sup> To Sundries - - - - -	2.3.6
Nov <sup>r</sup> 12 <sup>o</sup>	To Sundries - - - - -	0.5.6
Dec <sup>r</sup> 5 <sup>o</sup>	To Sundry Seapots	2.3.6
1709	April 22 <sup>o</sup> To Sundries - - - - -	2.16.-
Octo <sup>r</sup> 27 <sup>o</sup>	To Sundries - - - - -	6.11.-

L 72.11.5

1790<sup>th</sup>  
Sept<sup>r</sup> 17<sup>o</sup> To Sundries of puoter wase ----- 7.15.-

1705 Contra

C. L. D.

April 27	By Cash		6.19.5
Dec 9 <sup>th</sup>	By old Peates	66 1/4 lb at 1/2	3.6.3
Do	By Cash		16.0.0
1706 <sup>th</sup> Aug 26	By Do		10.0.0
Nov 11	By old peates	27 lb 1/2	1.7.0
1707 <sup>th</sup> April 6	By Do - Do	39 lb	1.19.0
May 13	By Cash		4.3.3
Nov 10 <sup>th</sup>	By old peates	27 1/2 lb 1/2	1.7.3
1708 <sup>th</sup> June 7	By Do - Do	23 1/2	1.3.6
Nov 12	By 2 fishins Butter & fishins		4.13.1
Do	By 1 Barrel Apples		0.8.0
Do	By 22 lb old peates		1.2.0
1709 <sup>th</sup> June 15	By 22 1/2 lb Do - Do		1.2.6
Oct 27	By 26 lb Do - Do		1.6.0
1790 <sup>th</sup> Sept 14	By Cash in full		17.13.11
			<u>72.11.5</u>

## Where it All Began

by Alex R. Neish

The origins of pewter are lost in the shadows of time, and defy anyone who seeks to reach a profound and factual knowledge. Of the established authorities, the only one of the early twentieth-century writers who seriously attacked the subject was Malcolm Bell, in his book *Old Pewter*. He went to the unlikely source of the Old Testament to cite verses from the Book of Numbers, from Isaiah, and from Ezekiel to show that the metal-making crafts were well-known in relation to gold, silver, brass, iron, lead and tin.

It seems at best unlikely that those working with the hammer and the furnace would not have stumbled across the secret of how to make pewter. Indeed, the earliest known example of the metal would seem to be the flask-shaped, two-handled, lidded container that was found in an Egyptian grave at Abydos. Dated to between 1580 and 1350 BC, its alloy comprises 93% tin, 6% lead and 1% copper. While Hatcher and Barker in their *History of British Pewter* refer to later finds of trinkets and small pieces in Holland, Greece and Scandinavia, it is clear that only with the Romans did pewter achieve popularity—even if nothing of relevance has been excavated in Rome itself. There, glass and bronze were obviously more popular. Generally, pewter finds have been limited to small statues of deities and miniatures of household articles, most located in graves, and to pilgrim ampullae for holy water not unlike those excavated from the River Thames in a much later period. As Malcolm Bell points out, however, there are references to the metal in contemporary Roman literature. In the first century AD, Suetonius

referred to silver vessels being removed from the temples and replaced by others of pewter, a custom that was to reappear in Europe much later.

What we now think of as pewter began with the Roman invasion of England. Here for the first time is evidence of the manufacture of items ranging from plates to dishes, from ewers to jugs, from bowls to cups. It was a craft that went far beyond the one-off item. It drew upon the English lead mines—and, above all, the Cornish tin mines. It was, however, only in 1970 that P. D. C. Brown identified in *Cornish Archeology* two stone bowls found in Cornwall as parts of a pewter mold. The discovery of the molds in Cornwall and of others in York, East Anglia and Manchester, along with residual waste material, confirms that there was a fairly widespread production to supply the Roman households.

The cache discovered in the late nineteenth century at Appleshaw, in Hampshire, close to the intersection of two Roman roads, was perhaps the most important in terms of quantity. Deliberately buried were ten circular dishes of varying sizes, a square dish 15 1/2 inches across, an octagonal jug, bowls, saucers, a deep dish and a wine cup. An oval dish with interlacing on the rim shows the early Christian symbol of a fish cast in relief. A saucer is marked with the other Christian symbol of Chi Rho, and there is a wine cup. All of this led the Rev. R. G. Engleheart, who made the find, to speculate that this may have been an early communion service—though the wine cup is substantially less certain than one that will be illustrated later.

All of this period, however, is so remote that few recent writers have devoted much attention to its products. The exception was Christopher Peal, who attacked the subject with enthusiasm in papers presented to the Cambridge Antiquarian Society in 1967. Despite his research, he finally had to admit that, "There is insufficient evidence to start building up a type sequence." He did, however, venture the (incorrect) opinion that it seemed probable that pewter was a purely Romano-British discovery "that evolved from the use of tin to copy the silver wares." He argued that the heavy oscillations in metal composition reflected no more than evolution inside a system of trial and error. This seems very probable.

Peal gathered together the research that had been carried out on limestone molds, together with the distribution of Anglo-Roman finds made by W. D. Wedlake, which showed a concentration in the areas of Bath and Appleshaw in the southwest of the country and one in the central eastern area south of the Fens and Northants. His ambition had been to establish a sequence and dating of plate rim types using the 200 surviving pieces known at the time of his research. Success, however, was not to be forthcoming. Equally, his work on the decoration of Romano-British pewter was quite inconclusive. When he published his book *British Pewter and Britannia Metal*, he condensed all of his research into four pages. He did, however, pay tribute to third- and fourth-century craftsmanship when he wrote of the octagonal flanged bowl that is now in the Department of Archaeology and Ethnology at Cambridge University, "For design, technique, decoration and enigma, the octagonal flanged bowl with Chi Ro and other presumably Christian decoration . . . is perhaps the finest piece of pewter in the country."

Despite this enthusiasm from such an expert, few collectors in Britain or the States have been bitten by the bug. The period smells less of pewter collecting than of archaeology. The pieces are too rare, and most of those recovered from excavations on land have suffered damage from plows or other machinery. Many have been eaten away by the corrosion of centuries; others have become black and ugly.

Over the years, two or three pieces crept into my own collection, more as curiosities than anything else. A few more came that had been excavated many years ago near Bath and kept unknown in a private English collection. A street market turned up a fine plate and now, after many a year, it finally seems justified to offer a photographic essay with some explanatory notes on what are a dozen fine examples of these early items. For the modern world this was, after all, where it all began. This was the sowing of the seed that over the centuries was to grow into an immense tree that cast its shadow across so many countries.

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M Bell. *Old Pewter*.

Hatcher, J. and Barker, T. C. *A History of British Pewter*, Longman, London, 1974.

Peal, C. *Papers Presented to the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, 1967.

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Brown, P. D. C. A Roman Pewter Mould from St Just in Penwith, Cornwall. Published in *Cornish Archaeology* 9.



Figure 1. A Romano-British wine or water carafe standing 9 1/2 inches high. Circa 250-350 AD. This piece, formerly in the Munday collection, was excavated from the River Thames, whose mud has protected so much antique pewter from the ravages of the centuries. Its condition is immaculate.



Figure 2. A Romano-British dish with a diameter of 14 1/2 inches, the 1 1/4 inch rim with heavy beading. In the well are 3 series of double-incised lines plus a very narrow double line in the center. On the reverse is a raised circular band about 1/4 inch wide that is found reinforcing all dishes of this period, and which led Peal to speculate that they were bases for ewers rather than plates for eating. Formerly in the Munday collection.

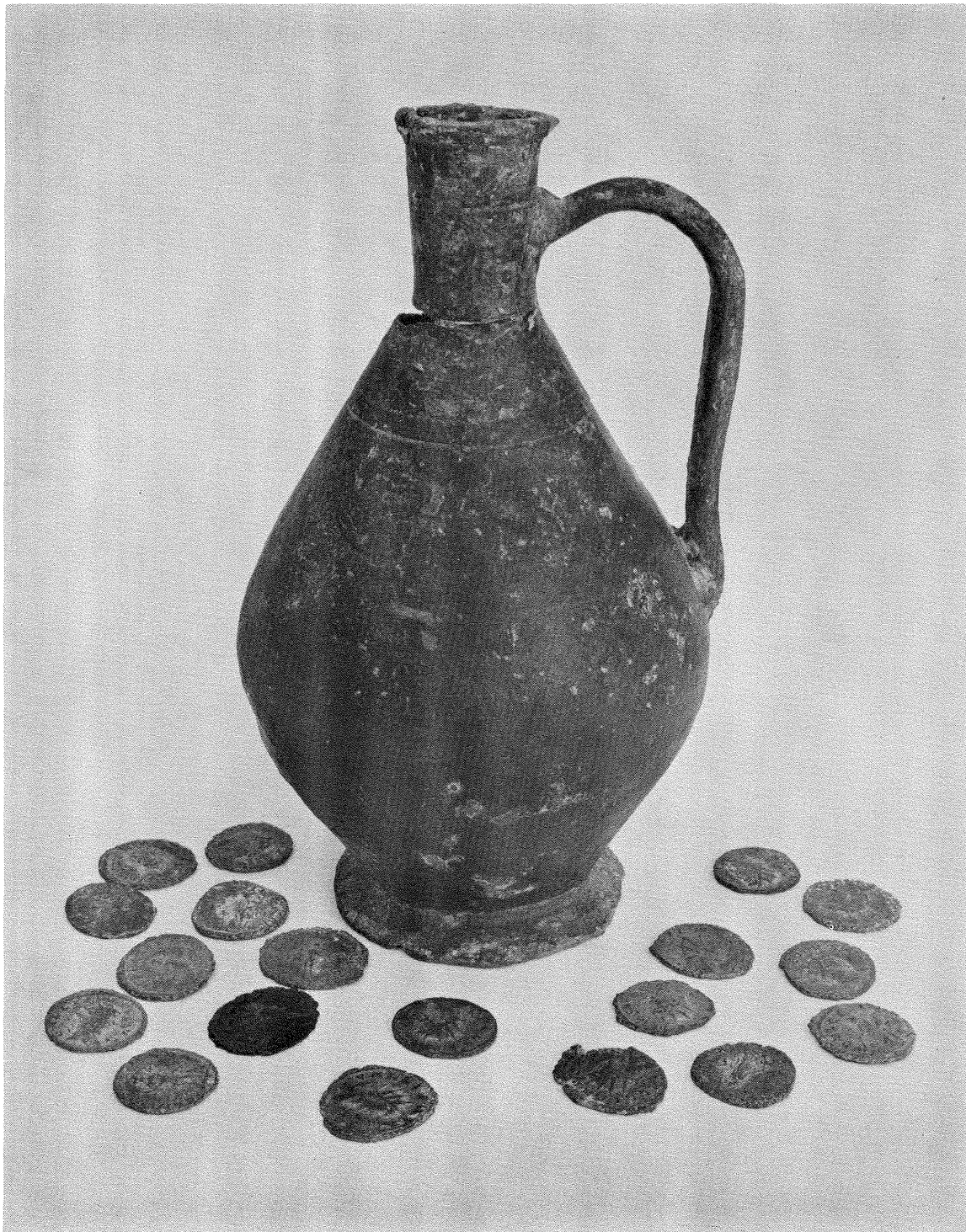


Figure 3. An extremely rare and very early pear-shaped Romano-British ewer with triangular shaped handle, 6 1/2 inches in height. When excavated at Ravenshead in Nottinghamshire, it revealed hidden inside a hoard of 19 Roman coins, one of which was pure bronze and the others silvered bronze. The coins show the Emperor Gallienus, who ruled the Roman empire from 263-268 AD, so this would be the ewer's latest date. However, the piece may well be slightly earlier, as the washing of coins in silver only existed from around 260-268 AD. Since the Cornish tin mines were worked from the mid-second century, this is undoubtedly one of the very earliest pieces of Anglo-Roman pewter that has survived. One side of the body is holed like so many of these flasks, perhaps due to the corrosive nature of Roman wine. The piece shows a marvelous green-brown patination.



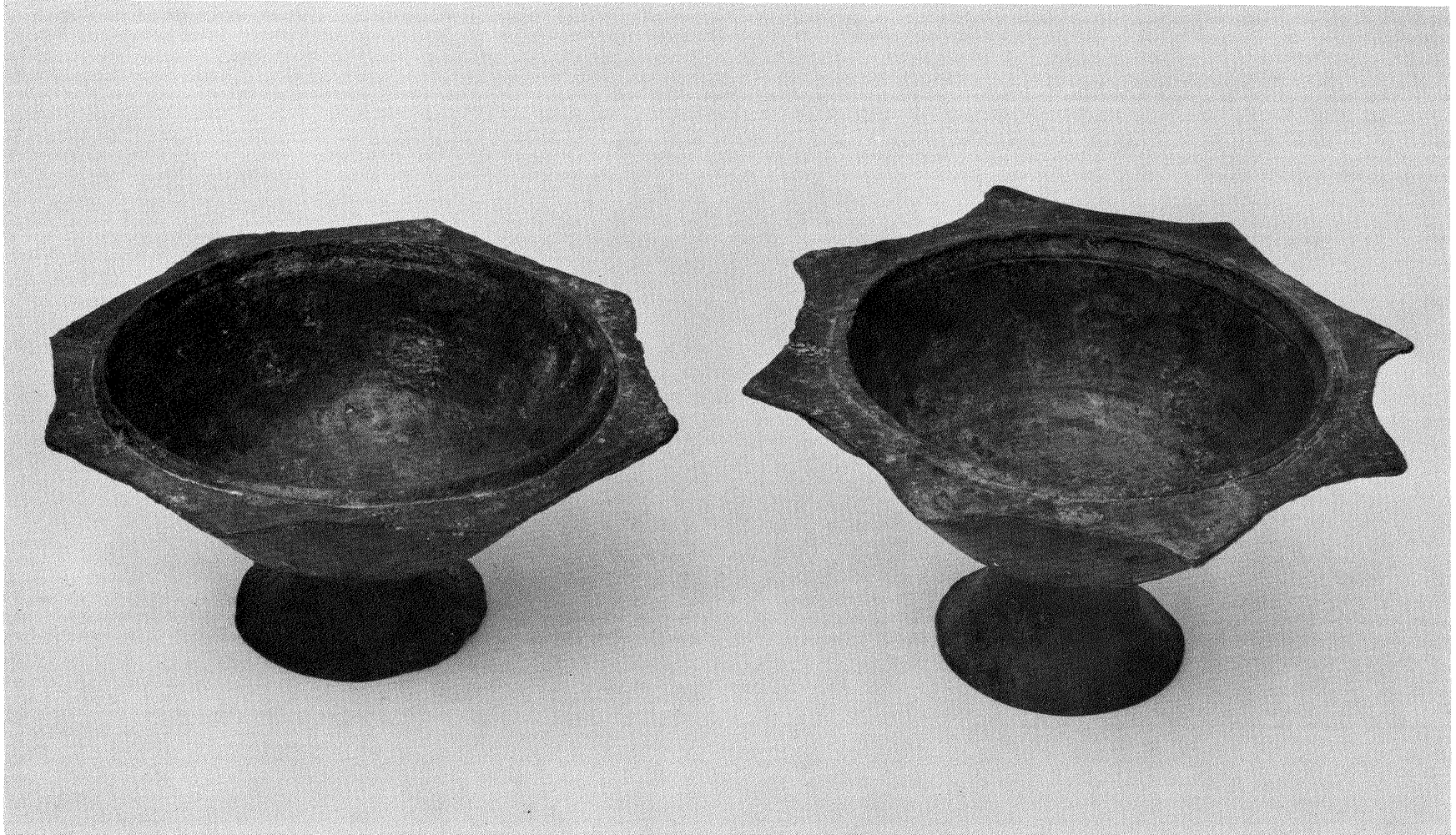


Figure 4. *Left:* A Romano-British hexagonal bowl unknown till recently. This example has a straight edge, compared with the other's curved one. The patination is a glowing brown, the height is some 2 1/2 inches and the bowl span 4 3/4 inches. *Right:* Another Romano-British hexagonal flanged bowl unknown until recently. With a height of 3 inches, it has a diameter of 5 3/4 inches. The bowl shows heavy turning rings. This piece was excavated near Bath and is a member of the family that excited Chris Peal, writing of one with engraving—which this example lacks—as “perhaps the finest piece of pewter of all.”

Figure 5. *Left*: A footed wine cup of what may be described as a classical form. The foot is hollow and the patination grey. Height 2 inches. *Center*: Another hollow-footed wine cup with grey patination. One expert says, "This shape is so modern you would expect to see it on a piece of ultra-modern Danish silver." *Right*: A footed Anglo-Roman wine cup with a height of  $1 \frac{4}{5}$  inches, excavated at Bath.





Figure 6. A saucer of the 2nd-4th century AD. The depth is 1 inch and the diameter 6 1/2 inches. On the reverse appears the usual raised reinforcement ring. The edge of the saucer carries engraved decoration



Figure 7. A remarkable Anglo-Romano dish 17 1/2 inches in diameter in perfect condition, covered by nature's gilding due to its having lain protected by mud for around 1500 years. The rim has a triangular bead with 2 decorated incised lines. The dish shows clear knife marks.



Figure 8. A footed wine cup found in Sussex. The height is 5.5 cm and the cup diameter 9.8 cm. It is engraved on the side with an early Christian symbol of two fishes and a cross (Figure 9). It comes with its associated saucer, which is a miniature of the usual larger plates with 2 incised lines near the center. The rim is slightly raised and has a round, strengthening bead. The saucer stands on small, raised feet. This is perhaps the only wine cup and saucer that can definitely be presumed to be an early Christian communion piece.

Figure 9. Detail of early Christian symbol on footed wine cup shown in Figure 8.





Figure 10. An outstanding dish, 19 3/4 inches in diameter and 1 1/4 inches in depth. The two-inch-wide rim is beaded with an indented design. In the center of the well is a raised circle with a finely decorated surround, in whose center in turn is another circle with six beaded flanges that may denote the sun, for many centuries an object of Roman worship. The dish stands out for its intricate decoration and the time that must have been devoted to its creation. It obviously was used in some important ceremony, and now has been further enhanced by the nature's gilding that covers it.

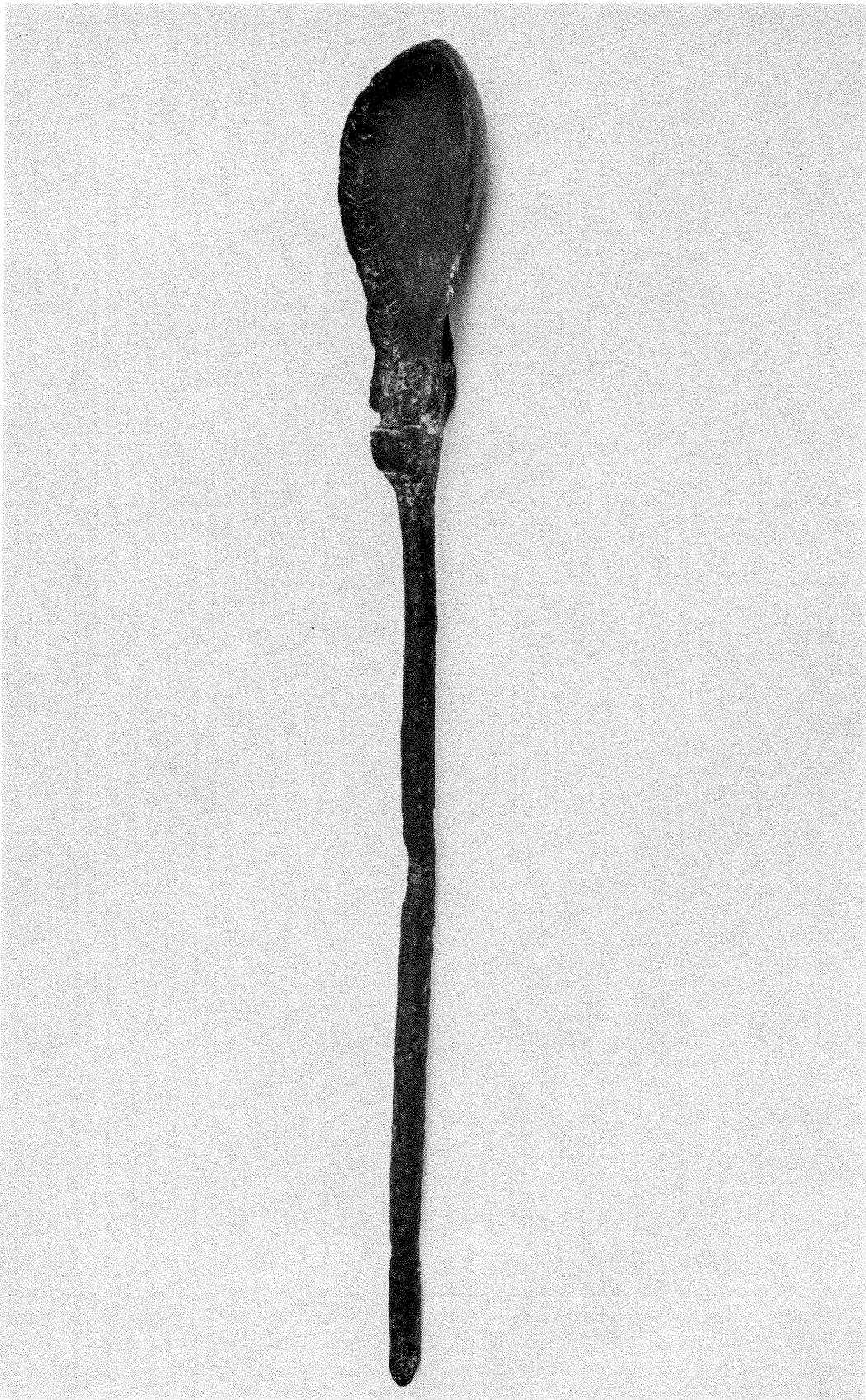


Figure 11. An extremely fine spoon with a cast decorated pewter bowl and an iron stem, thought to have been used by the invading Romans to force open the shells of oysters.



# *Frederick Bassett: a Revision of Dates*

by Andrew F. Turano

It has been documented in all of the recent standard references on American pewterers that Frederick Bassett worked both in New York City and Hartford, CT from 1761-1799. Ledlie I. Laughlin states that Frederick moved to Hartford, CT, "at some time during the Revolution."<sup>1</sup> Some new information has recently been published that more accurately dates this move and significantly extends his stay in Connecticut.

First allow me to compile and review his presently-known history in order to tie in these new data more easily. He was baptized in New York in 1740, the youngest son of John Bassett, whose tools and shop he acquired upon the father's death in 1761. He became a freeman of New York in 1769. He married Jan(n)atje Vrendenburg(h) on March 15, 1764, and, after her death, he married Susanna(h) Bubelot on March 26, 1772. As stated above, we know that, at some time during the Revolution, he moved to Hartford. This was made evident by a recorded deed for a house he purchased there in 1781; and he advertised in the *Connecticut Courant* that his house was for sale in 1785. Prior to or upon the sale of his Hartford house in February, 1786, he moved back to New York, re-establishing his trade there, as shown by his listings in the New York Directories beginning in 1787. He died in 1800, leaving no heirs to continue his craft. We also have documented bills of sale to merchants in Woodbury, CT dated 1773 and 1775,<sup>2</sup> and a bill of sale dated 1787 from his shop in New York to Dr. Daniel Butler in Hartford.<sup>3</sup>

Based on this information, the presently

accepted working dates of Frederick Bassett are listed as follows:<sup>4</sup>

New York: 1761-1780 and 1785-1799.  
Hartford: 1780-1785.

An added piece of data that may be germane to this information is that the British occupied New York on September 15, 1776, and left that city on November 25, 1783. L. G. Myers, in his "Notes,"<sup>5</sup> indicated that the Bassett brothers exhibited rather militant personalities by "taking violent possession" of the French Church in New York in 1767.

A recent publication printed in 1994,<sup>6</sup> which chronicles the history and restoration of Hartford's Ancient Burying Ground and lists the inscriptions on each of 526 stones, throws new light on his working dates in Hartford. One relevant inscription reads as follows: "Here lies interred ye remains of Willemyntje daughter of Mr. Frederick & Mrs. Janatje Bassett. She departed this life Nov. ye 23d, 1777 aged 12 years & 4 months."<sup>7</sup> In the text, the authors state that Frederick Bassett's family evacuated New York and moved to Hartford in 1776 after the capture of New York by the British. There are also references to the deaths and burials of other members of the family in Hartford. In addition to Willemyntje, Elsy, aged 2, died the 6th of February, 1777. She is described on the gravestone as the daughter of Frederick and Susanna(h) (Bubelot) Bassett; and, finally, Frederick's mother, Elsy, wife of John, died on April 14th, 1778.<sup>8</sup> This information was documented in 1877 by Charles J. Hoadley, then the Connecticut State Librarian, and first published in its entirety

in this volume with updates and minor revisions.

Thus, on the basis of this new information, Frederick Bassett's working dates and locations should be revised as follows:

New York: 1761-1776 and 1785-1799.  
Hartford: 1776-1785.

This adds four years to his residence in Hartford, and, considering his influence on the Danforths in design,<sup>9</sup> as well as the previously mentioned bills of sale for pewter addressed to his Connecticut customers, Bassett obviously had an active market for his wares in that state. If, indeed, he made and sold pewter while in Hartford, did he mark it differently? That may be difficult without new dies, since most of his touches have incorporated in them 'New York' or 'N.Y.' There is an illustration of a mug made by Bassett and donated to a church in Hartland, CT in 1776,<sup>10</sup> but this mug is marked with L465 on the inside bottom, not unexpected for hollowware.<sup>11</sup> Verbal communication with John Carl Thomas, who illustrated and researched this find, reveals that the mug was donated to the church as one of a set of six, dated 1776, but was most likely made prior to that date. We have, therefore, at this time, no evidence that his Hartford pieces could be separately identified by any change in his usual marking pattern. It is my impression that Frederick Bassett considered himself a refugee from New York, fully intending to return to that city when expedient. His established trade already had business ties to various customers in Connecticut. He was a man of strong principles. It seems likely, therefore, that he continued his business as it functioned in New York, and it seems unlikely that he altered his marks while he was in Hartford.

## References

1. Ledlie I. Laughlin, *Pewter in America*, Vol. II, Barre Publishers, Barre, MA, 1969, p. 6.
2. *Ibid.* Plate LX, # 469, 470.
3. John Carl Thomas, *Connecticut Pewter and Pewterers*, The Connecticut Historical Society, 1976, p. 30.
4. Ledlie I. Laughlin, *Pewter in America*, Vol III, Barre Publishers, Barre, MA, 1971, p. 208.
5. Myers, Louis G., *Some Notes on American Pewter*, Country Life Press, NY, 1926, pp. 11,12.
6. William Hosley and Shepherd M. Holcombe, Sr., *By Their Markers Ye Shall Know Them*, The Ancient Burying Ground Assoc., Inc., Hartford, CT, 1994.
7. *Ibid.* pp. 49, 61.
8. *Ibid.* p. 134.
9. John Carl Thomas, op. cit., p. 28.
10. *Ibid.* p. 29, fig. 27.
11. Personal communication from Daniel Truckey, Curatorial Assistant, The Connecticut Historical Society.

# *Yet Another Coffee Urn*

*by Joseph O. Reese*

Another coffee urn appeared shortly after publication of the 1995 Spring Bulletin article, "Now There Are Five." The urn was made by Smith & Feltman, britannia makers, who were located at 23 Dean Street, Albany, NY from 1849–1852. To date, no other urn examples of Smith and Feltman's partnership have appeared.

The urn (Figure 1) is a massive piece, 18 inches high. The body follows the general shape of Roswell Gleason's urn, shown in the previous article.<sup>1</sup> For size comparison, the new urn is shown in Figure 2 next to the more slender Boardman & Hart 14 7/8-inch urn also illustrated previously.

The touch marks under the octagonal base (Figure 3) read, "Smith & Feltman

Albany NY 3000-30." The number 30 indicates a 30-cup capacity. Note also the octagonal base and collared pedestal and the octagonal flared top of the body just below the lid. These appear very similar to the Leonard, Reed & Barton urn shown in the previous article.

Yet another coffee urn? They must have had a number of large (but sedate) parties in those days!

## *References*

1. Reese, J. O. (1995). "Now There Are Five." *PCCA Bulletin 11*, No. 3, p. 85, Figure 4.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 84, Figure 2.



Figure 1. Smith & Feltman coffee urn in the collection of the author.



Figure 2. Comparison of Smith & Feltman urn (on right) with urn made by Leonard, Reed & Barton.



Figure 3. Marks on base of urn in Figure 1.

## *Whimsey?*

*by Charles W. Danforth, Jr.*

We look at a piece of pewter and find many different reasons to add it to our collections. Perhaps one of those reasons is a whim. I suspect that some of us have acquired a piece of pewter for which that was the only reason. Whimsey may be one of our reasons for adding a piece to our collection, but did whimsey ever enter into the pewterer's production of our new acquisition?

Roswell Gleason made the teapot in Figure 1. His mark, Figure 2, is incised on its base. The height of the teapot is 9 inches overall; 6 3/4 inches from base to lid. The base is 4 inches in diameter, while the diameter at the top of the body is 4 1/2

inches. I recently purchased the teapot because of the maker and the condition, and because the handle caught my eye. Then whimsey came into play: Mr. Gleason's, not mine.

Figure 3 is an enlarged (approximately 3X) photograph of the teapot finial. The finial is a miniature reproduction of the body of the teapot. We can superimpose a spout and handle, copied from the teapot, on the enlarged photograph of the finial and see the result in Figure 4. Was this finial created as a whimsey by Mr. Gleason? Perhaps. Has this been done before by Roswell Gleason or others? I've not seen it done. Have you?



Figure 1. Roswell Gleason teapot in the collection of the author.



Figure 2. R. Gleason touch on the base of the teapot in Figure 1.



Figure 3. Enlargement of the finial on the teapot in Figure 1. Approximately 3X actual size.

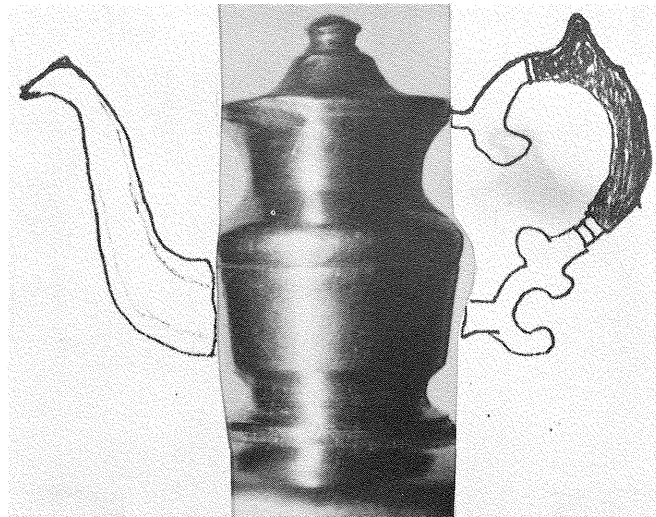


Figure 4. With the addition of handle and spout, the finial becomes a miniature replica of the teapot in Figure 1.

## *Book Review*

*by Tom Madsen*

### *Scarborough, Quincy, Carolina Metalworkers: Coppersmiths, Pewterers, Tinsmiths of North Carolina and South Carolina, Quincy Scarborough, Fayetteville, NC.*

In his recently-published book, PCCA member Quincy Scarborough traces the influence that coppersmiths, pewterers and tinsmiths had upon the development of North and South Carolina during the 18th and 19th centuries.

In his breezy but factual manner, Mr. Scarborough tells of the similar influence that the British had on coppersmithing and pewtering in America: control of raw materials, an apprentice program, the need to buy damaged goods in order to have material to form new ones and their influence on the design of the items manufactured for sale.

He tells us that the three trades were often performed by the same person, as there was often not enough demand for one trade to survive in an area. The rural nature of the Carolinas required that peddlers be employed to sell the wares door to door. Often provisioned from the North, Connecticut in particular, the peddlers set out for Fayetteville, the main center of commerce, where local wares were added to the wagon. Records show that a peddler's

pewter sales could be 25% or more of the total.

Mr. Scarborough notes that the pewterers operating in Charlestown, Fayetteville and Augusta all had Connecticut ties. There is also a chapter devoted to the influence of Negro workers.

We learn that as copper and pewter began to wane it was, at least, partly due to the availability of tinware. In reality, tinware was sheet steel coated with tin. It was cheap and easily formed—even preformed kits were produced for home assembly. Tinware fell victim to enameled items that did not rust and were easier to clean. In the book, Mr. Scarborough states, “Fancier tastes and machine-made products of the industrial age had simply overwhelmed the made-by-hand craftsmen and they could not compete.”

A listing of known coppersmiths, pewterers and tinsmiths of North and South Carolina is included. Copies of the book are available for \$33.00 from Quincy at P.O.Box 67, Fayetteville, NC 28302.

## *Necrology*

### *Reginald F. French*

Reginald French, 89, professor and antiques dealer, died on Saturday, February 10, 1996. Mr. French was born in West Lebanon, NH, in 1906. He did his undergraduate work at Dartmouth College and his graduate studies at Harvard University. His teaching career was spent at the University of Missouri, Williams College, the University of Nebraska, and Amherst College.

Mr. French was a well-known antiquarian in the Pioneer Valley. With his wife, Rachel, he was owner of R & R French Antiques. He wrote numerous articles on pewter; lectured on candlesticks, delftware, and hearth furniture as a curatorial staffer at Sturbridge Village; and compiled a checklist of the paintings of Erastus Salisbury Field. He was a member of the Pioneer Valley Antiques Dealers Association, the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, and the Connecticut Historical Society, and a member and former president of the Amherst Historical Society. Mr. French had been a member of the Pewter Collectors' Club of America since 1945.

Mr. French is survived by his wife, two daughters and a son, and four grandchildren.

### *Mrs. George W. (Bernice) Weir*

Bernice Weir died on March 26, 1996. She had been active in community affairs in Lloyd Harbor, NY and helped organize antique shows in the area. She was one of the dealers at an antique center in the area,

and was involved as a volunteer in programs at St. Patrick's church.

Like her late husband, George, Mrs. Weir was an active member of the Pewter Collectors' Club of America. She joined the Club in 1968. Mrs. Weir is survived by five daughters, three sons, and 16 grandchildren.

### *Henry J. Harlow*

Henry J. Harlow, 83, former chief curator of Old Sturbridge Village, died on September 19, 1995. Mr. Harlow was born in Shrewsbury, MA, and graduated from William and Mary College in Williamsburg, VA. After graduation, he operated antique shops in Shrewsbury and Norwalk, CT, before joining the staff of Old Sturbridge as assistant curator in 1957. He was named chief curator in 1966. During his retirement, he was associated with the Skinner Auction Gallery in Bolton, MA.

Mr. Harlow was a member of the Shrewsbury and Boylston Historical Societies, the Worcester Historical Museum, the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiques, the Bostonian Society, and the Pewter Collectors' Club of America. He was a life member of Old Sturbridge Village.

### *Other Members*

E. L. (Bud) Armstrong; May , 1996.

Mrs. Ben (June) Carde

George Heussner

Roger Tubbs