



# The Doorknob Collector

Number 34

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## Historic wooden doorknobs

by Maud Eastwood

**H**istorically, wood served as the original material for fashioning door handles, whether elongated or round, affixed or movable, domestic or foreign. Few examples of these earliest of the early handmade types survived. However, a wide variety of 1800's wooden knobs, reflecting the technical and artistic progression of the 19th century, do exist and it is from these specimen that collections have been and will continue to be supplied. Serious collectors should take note of this minority among American doorknobs.



ORNAMENTAL WOOD COMPANY  
DESIGNS 1870's



Wooden doorknobs of the 1800's were variously hand-carved or mechanically turned or pressed. The lineage of domestic 19th century wooden knobs may be fairly easily traced. Three manufacturers stand out as major forces in meeting the needs of their eras: Nashua, 1840's; Ornamental Wood Co., 1870's; Jos. Bardsley, 1880's thru early 1900's. The latter two companies produced wooden knobs for at least a dozen important builder's hardware manufacturers and an undetermined number of dealers, thus qualifying as original sources for a majority of historic wooden knobs found by today's collectors. The following will extend the usefulness of the wooden knob material found on pages 3 and 222 of the *Antique Builders'*

## Convention Update

by Helen & Bill Byington,  
Co-Chairmen 1989 Convention

Regarding the convention dates for 1989, at the Indianapolis meeting, we thought things were all set for an August date at the Holiday Inn in Iowa, City. Upon checking with the Motel, when we got home, we found that there had been a misunderstanding about the display space we needed, and the days we needed the space. After consultation with some of the board members, the decision was made to go back to the September dates, and The Days Inn (Formerly Ironmen

Inn) in Coralville had what we wanted. We have used the facility for a number of functions, and hope the members will find it satisfactory. Some of the plans for our pre-convention tour (on Thursday before the convention) include a visit to the Herbert Hoover Library and Park Site and to Old Capitol, Iowa's first capitol in Iowa City.

More information will be available at a later date. We are very sorry that the original plans did not work out.

NASHUA 1845



## Wooden doorknobs continued

Hardware (ABH) and pages 59-66, The Antique Door-knob (TAD).

These companies varied in their manufacturing and merchandising methods according to the times. New Hampshire's Nashua Lock Co. showed little variation in knob configuration and achieved an impressive production record of 35,000 pair of Rosewood knobs in 1845. Typically early 1800's in shape, Nashua knobs were short, squat, thick-necked and all-wood construction, and not impossible to find today. Connecticut's Ornamental Wood Co. (Eastlake Period) fame was in being the first company to produce and push a line of wooden knobs with high design formed by the use of dies. Their 1870 catalogue illustrated specific doorknob designs with a buyer option of furnishing his own design and paying for the dies, thus securing exclusive use. The output of this company warranted a New York City warehouse. Many collections including examples of Ornamental Wood Company's line, notably the Roman soldier with Greek Key border or stylized leaf design.



BARDSLEY PATENT KNOB, 1884



IMPORTED HARDWOOD KNOBS

New York's, Jos. Bardsley, manufacturer of Spring Hinges, Door Checks and wooden lock-trim, provided wooden doorknobs for major builder's hardware manufacturers and dealers for some three decades. It is not known if smaller speciality companies of the day, who dealt with certain types of doorknob fastenings, with wooden knobs an option (Gilbert, Parker & Whipple, Prouty, and the Union Doorknob Company. See ABH index.) contracted with Bardsley or produced their own wood knob heads. Bardsley knobs were offered in 1884 through Shannon and Buhl & Son; in 1885 by Yale & Towne; in the 1890's by Russwin, Corbin, Chicago, Skillman and Sargent; and early in the 1900's by Reading, P.E. Guerin and Penn. The foregoing listing is not presumed to be complete or the dates exclusive.

The knob shapes and woods commonly carried in stock by Bardsley commercial accounts were box,

round, or ball in shape and formed of Oak, Maple, or Walnut. Oval, egg and round-fluted shapes and a large number of exotic and imported woods were available on special order. In 1895 Corbin offered the largest selection of woods, twenty two from stock; Ash, birch, Chestnut, Cypress, Hazel, Maple, Oak, Red Oak, Sycamore, Whitewood, and Yellow Pine. At an additional price were: Apple, Butternut, Bird's Eye Maple, Black Walnut, Cherry, Cuban Mahogany, Curly Maple, East Indian Mahogany, Mexican Mahogany, Red Wood, and White Mahogany. Bardsley ornamentation for wooden knobs was confined to the mellon cut and two to four rings continued p. 8

### The Doorknob Collector

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# Eola, a quaint little town

by Ray Nemeč

Can you tell me where Eola, Illinois is? That is a question we receive every so often so we assume some of our members would like to know more about Eola and why the club has its mailing address there.

Eola appealed to me when I became editor of the newsletter. Situated at the intersection of two railroads and between Naperville and Aurora, the name was short, easy to write and the box rent was reasonable. And Eola had a certain mystery about it.

Eola was described by resident Deborah Sklenar for the Chicago Tribune as "two blocks in the middle of nowhere." Eola is unincorporated with a population of about 110. Most of the people live on Eola Road or 4th Street. There is no 1st, 2nd or 3rd streets, nor for that matter, no 5th or 6th streets. In 1888 the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern railroad, an "outer belt line," was built. An interchange with the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad was made at Eola. This resulted in a plan for a development to be called Belt City. The plot was drawn but the idea died. Fourth Street is one of the reminders of that effort.

Frederick Stolp, from New York state, in search of thick red soil to make bricks came to the area in 1834. He found it and stayed. Stolp built a home to raise his family.



Postmaster Jean Hatten (left) and her sister, Beulah Anderson, greet ADCA staff with friendly smiles.

A few other families soon moved to the area but not much happened until the 1860's when the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad began laying tracks in the area. When the railroad crossed a nearby road they called it Lund's Crossing after the farmer who owned the property.

According to a story in the Aurora Beacon-News, "when townfolk tried to get a post office (in 1871) they were told to find another name, since Lund's Crossing already was taken."

After some discussion the name Eola, an Indian word for "north wind," was suggested and accepted. With open land to the west and north, the name seemed to be ideal.

The town remains the same today as it was 100 years ago, a tiny oasis of rural life in a sea of suburban boom. The only storefront is where the

post office has been located for many years.

From the very beginning when the material for clay bricks was discovered, people have had big ideas for Eola. A few industries flourished for a time. One such industry at Eola was the Reber canning factory. Clarence Kramer recalled his experience for the Beacon-News as a canning company employee: "Cabbage, oh, geez. Lots of cabbage. We would put on boots up to our hips and jump in a vat full of cabbage. We'd tramp it down until the juice came to the top, then closed the top." Six or eight months later, the sauerkraut was ready. "And I ate that stuff like a pig," Clarence said.

Eola has had 19 postmasters since 1871. Jean Hatten is the current postmaster. She and her sister, part-time employee Beulah Anderson, continued p. 7



Eola's only storefront is where the post office has been located for many years.

# Ornamental design in antique doorknobs

by Len Blumin

## FOURFOLD SYMMETRY

- H-220 a,b,c      Domed versions of a popular vernacular design.  
H-241a            Note the different center design.  
H-256a            A flatter version of H-256.  
H-267a            There are several versions of this wrought knob.

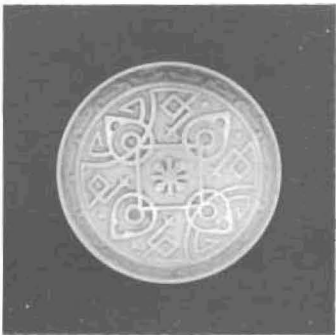
H-220a



H-241a



H-220b



H-256a



H-220c



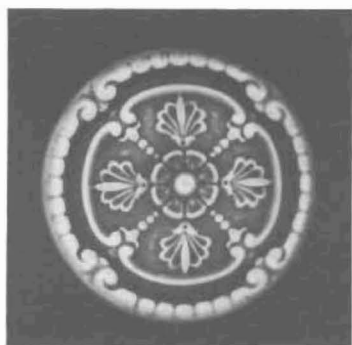
H-267a



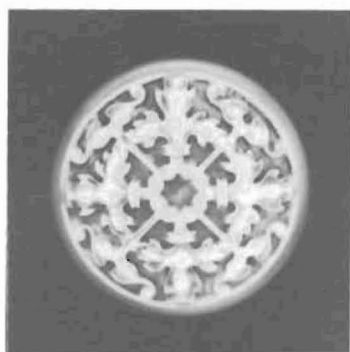
FOURFOLD SYMMETRY  
(continued)

- H-472 Unknown.  
H-473 Nice wrought knob.  
H-474 Too busy for my taste.  
H-475 Unknown.  
H-476 Unknown.  
H-477 Schroeder, Cincinnati, Ohio. Patented shank.

H-472



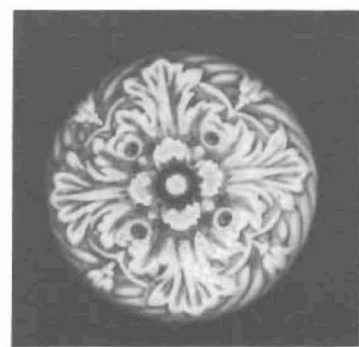
H-475



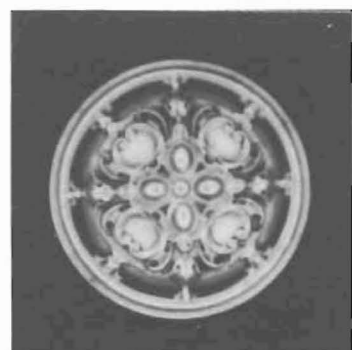
H-473



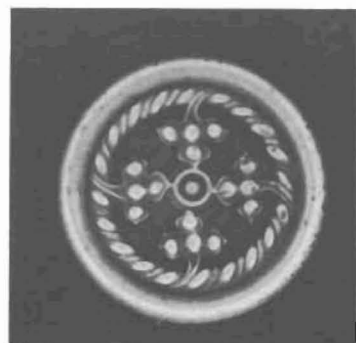
H-476



H-474



H-477



# Going, going... auction is popular

The ADCA annual auction has been a regular event since the first convention at San Francisco in 1982. Convention host Len Blumin was the first auctioneer. The auction was a big hit, and Blumin had started a tradition.

The auction afforded opportunity for members to sell entire collections, parts of a collection or a single knob. The quality of the hardware in the auction allowed members a chance to bid on many fine pieces.

The auction was again included in the 1983 convention program at Naperville, Illinois, John Holland was the auctioneer.

When the convention moved to Waverly, Iowa, in 1984 the services of Verne Andresseen, a local auctioneer, were obtained by Arnie Fredrick. Andresseen brought a professional approach to the auction. Everyone found it interesting and it was generally accepted the auction would be a regular feature of all future conventions. It was hoped Andresseen would be the auctioneer in 1985.

When Andresseen was unable to make the 1985 convention at St. Louis, Ray Nemecek became the fourth auctioneer in four years.

1986 and 1987 brought Andresseen back as he conducted the auctions in Minneapolis and Des Moines.

The 1988 auction proved a real surprise. A large number of items were placed in the auction for sale. When a professional auctioneer, obtained for the



Bill Causey, 1988 ADCA Auctioneer

event, was delayed in arriving, the club tapped new member Bill Causey to start the auction. (Causey had indicated he had done some auctioneering as a hobby) His enthusiasm as an auctioneer met with great approval and he finished what he started. With Causey at the helm, the seventh annual auction set records for the amount of knobs sold and commission received by the club.

Again in 1989, the auction promises to be an event conventioners will enjoy. The auction has been under the direction of founding member Arnie Fredrick since 1984. ■



"SOLD...TO THE WOMAN WHOSE HUSBAND JUST SHOT HIMSELF!"

## The golden doorknob award



DALLAS, TX -- February 3, 1989 -- This one-of-a-kind award was presented to entertainer Jimmy Dean by songwriter/performer Roger Miller. It was created in recognition of Miller's award-winning song, "King of the Road," being introduced on "The Jimmy Dean Show." The plaque reads, "To Jimmy Dean, for a million doors you opened for me, Roger Miller."

This cherished memorabilia hangs in the den of Jimmy's home.

Jimmy Dean is chairman of the board of Jimmy Dean Meat Company. The Dallas-based company is a division of the Sara Lee Corporation, an international food and consumer products company with annual sales of approximately \$9 billion.

Jimmy, who's famous song, "Big John" is still heard regularly on the radio, became a member of ADCA in 1988. ■



ADCA member Jimmy Dean, gave singer/song writer Roger Miller an opportunity on his TV program.

**ADCA CONVENTION**  
*September 21-24, 1989*  
*Iowa City, Iowa*

Moving your doorknobs to a new address? Please let us know. Be sure to include your old address along with your new address and mail them to ADCA, P.O. Box 126, Eola, Illinois 60519-0126

Eola...

handle the duties at the post office including ADCA mail and an occasional telephone call regarding the club.

There is no mail delivery to the 40 homes in Eola, so Jean and Beulah get to visit with all their neighbors almost every day. The post office has 178 lock boxes, they are all rented and there is a waiting list.

The farm land around Eola is fast disappearing to developments and the master plan for Aurora has Eola someday becoming a part of the city.

Jean Hatten and her husband, Bill, have been Eola residents since 1948. Jean says, "we want to stay Eola. We think we're a quaint little town." ■



FROM THE ARCHIVES  
by Alice Chadonich

There was a good response for catalog orders from our last order blank which appeared in the November-December issue of **The Doorknob Collector**. Hopefully those members who placed orders will find these copies beneficial in helping them research and identify some of their hardware.

Again, a reminder, that orders for catalog copies are processed only periodically and when announced. This, is to save wear and tear on the originals in the archives.

Wooden doorknobs....

turned on the sides of the box shaped knobs.

Wooden knobs from European sources, fashioned from exotic hardwoods, are particularly durable in body and finish, have distinctively turned shapes and are usually fitted with fine metal collars and scalloped roses. (see illustration)

Wooden knobs may be appropriately paired with roses of matching wood, metal trimmed wood, or plain or ornamental roses and escutcheon plates (see page 37, 70, 85, 86, ABH). Differences in shank diameters for different eras and companies are so diverse that a wrong pairing would be unlikely: Nashua knobs shank's are large (1 - 1/2"). Ornamental Wood Company shanks are small (1/2"), Bardsley shanks are c.5/8" and, as lately as 1910, offered wood, plain bronze or ornamental roses. If the



HANDWORKED DESIGN

shank fits the opening or thimble (all else being equal) it is a match.

Several possibilities exist in the collection of wooden knobs, apart from a general take-what-comes selection. Consider a collection of Bardsley knobs in as many woods as may be found or the eight styles of 1892 (see page 59 TAD), specimen from each era, foreign knobs, roses and keyholes, or an example from each known manufacturer. Today's scarcity of any one type of yesterday's wooden knobs would be directly attributed to an original low volume, vulnerability to damage, mis-handling and careless disposal. In any event, wooden doorknobs should always be represented in comprehensive knob collections if for no other reason than their importance as evolving examples of the original doorknob. ■



PRIMITIVE, HANDWORKED WOODEN KNOB WITH LIFTING LATCH. ART PAHOLKE

Manufacturers of Knobs, Wooden 1922  
 Allen, Chas., Terryville, Conn.  
 Corbin, P. & F., New Britain, Conn.  
 Estes & Sons, E. B., New York City.  
 Foster, Merriam & Co., Meriden, Conn.  
 National Brass Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.  
 Piqua Handle & Mfg. Co., Piqua, Ohio. (Enameled.)  
 Strock & Co., L. W., Bethlehem, Pa.  
 Tru Lite Mfg. Co., Bradford, Pa.

Members are reminded that your dues entitles you to advertise items for sale, trade or wanted at no charge.

**FOR TRADE OR SALE.** Cherub (A-204), Priest (A-205), Hummingbird (A-106), Japanese Lady (A-304), Plumed Helmet (A-302). Best offer for either one or all five knobs. Charles Wardell (#9), Box 195, Trinity, NC 27370.

**FOR SALE.** Doorknob collection. Glass, wooden, pewter, iron, brass and many more. Anthony Santelli (#142), 838 - 4th Ave., Beaver Falls, PA 15010.

**FOR SALE OR TRADE.** Columbus (A-316) knobs \$75 each or possible trade for comparable knob. Joe Mann (#70), 5364 Speedway Drive, Speedway IN 46224. Ph: 317-244-4306 or Steve Menchhofer (#60), 5538 West 25th St., Speedway, IN 46224. Ph: 317-291-6043.

**FOR SALE.** Addenda to "Victorian Decorative" by Len Blumin. Additional information on over 100 doorknobs. \$2 prepaid. ADCA, P.O. Box 126, Eola, IL 60519-0126.

**WANTED.** Knobs, number K-214 with arabic design, flat or round. Also, any Victorian hardware (knobs, plates, locks, hinges, etc., for restoration project.) John Decker (#141), 517 Clayton St., San Francisco, CA 94117.

**WANTED.** 7 brass knobs & plates sets B-218. Also wanted antique window locks. Jene Bunten (#173), 2061 Raymond, Signal Hill, CA 90806. Ph. 213-597-5176.