



The Door Knob Collector

Number 67

September - October 1994

Message From Maudie

Happily, we have a Providence that does not grant all foolish wishes or I would never have lived to experience my 75th Birthday celebration, ADCA style. Now, THAT was a celebration I would not have missed for anything in the world. Really heady stuff!

In retrospect, I see where I probably caused Loretta a few gray hairs in the last hour before the surprise birthday festivities began, when, in actuality, it was MY hair- - - and the alarm . . . that delayed the proceedings.

The Scenario:

Following the dismantling of our convention displays was a respectable interval in which to catch our breath and dress for the banquet. The last thing I remember was realizing I was tired - - - laying back on the bed- - - thinking that I had better set the alarm in case I dozed off. You guessed it, I did not set the alarm. I awoke 20 minutes before I was due in the lobby. A knock on the door revealed that every one was in the lobby ready to leave.

I was really disgusted with myself and suggested I could catch a later ride, that my hair was not combed. I knew that I could not appear with my hair down, seeing that at this stage in my life I am affecting a swept back "do" with a hairpiece. (Having had my hair squashed all day long under a W.W. I army hat which was part of my vintage costume, it really needed some attention.) Arriving at the banquet with pins, spray and hairpiece in my purse I quickly disappeared into the ladies room, while the others entered the banquet room, I thought I would not be missed during the refreshment time. Not realizing that

they all were waiting for me, Loretta, upon advise of the others, stepped in to see if I was OK. She stated that they were waiting for me to start their presentation. Having no idea what was coming up, I was hard pressed to understand her attitude, any more than I did a remark by a male friend of the Nemecs, who that morning had said, "You are having a birthday?"



And I thought, "with Loretta's birthday the day before mine, they must have been talking about birthdays and mine was mentioned, too. I simply said, "yes," and forgot it. Face it, if it isn't written down to study, my attention span is short.

Upon entering the banquet room I couldn't believe it, everyone was already seated and there was a convenient place for me to sit. I hoped no one else saw me slip in. My first inkling that I might be involved in something planned came when the Master of Ceremony, Arnie Fredrick, started a proclamation on important events that happen this day on patents, folding doors and birth of a child on August 9th, 1919. That I could relate

to. Not too many in a room full of people would have that date for their birth. I ducked down and looked at those around me and they were laughing and starting to sing Happy Birthday. I silently wished they would sing it to Loretta, too, or at least for us both. I was unaware more was coming.

They ushered me to a table by the microphone and I thought, OH NO, I am going to be asked to speak a few words, and who is going to be coming up to sit with me in all those empty chairs? Then things began to blur as to what happened and in what sequence. I remember well-wishes being read from a book, a crown was placed upon my head, while Loretta stated "THIS IS YOUR LIFE, MAUDE SMITH EASTWOOD." Then my life was being recounted, and there walking in full length of the banquet floor was my oldest son, Bill, in the flesh. I cried, even as I am now crying in remembering. There was no way he could have time to come. He was in the process of accepting a new job in Portland, an important major change. He was in the process of selling his house. He had explained to me his itinerary for the week and every day was full. (I had excused his not asking me for my flight plan, as he usually did, due to the bind he was in. I understood.)

More dialogue transpired, then my son Bob walked in - - -the full length of the room. I cried once again. Loretta quickly throws me a napkin. (I caught Debbie, from St. Louis, shedding tears along with me). There was no way Bob could have gotten away to come. He and his wife have an Arabian horse farm and a tack



Maud Eastwood and her children,
Jodyne Holloway, Bill & Bob Eastwood.

(Maudie Message continued)

store. They had just taken a vacation, other commitments took two other week-ends, followed by a family reunion. He needed to catch up. But, he came.

Then daughter Jodyne walks in. I still cried. (I had idly thought, how too bad Jody couldn't come- - if she had, she would have walked in first, being the oldest.) I had asked her to help me decide what clothes to take and had shown her my exhibit, the week before. And there was no way she had time to come. She had taken in the family reunion, spent four more days with me, taken a summer class, was due back to her choral music teaching job, being an accomplished organist, was committed to an endless round of church and wedding music, but still came.

Only my dear husband, Norval, was missing due to recent surgery. He is mending better than his doctor hoped.

A wonderful dedication was put together with cake and video. Every one knew about it, via the newsletter, and no one dropped a hint. Remarkable. A Super, Super event.

What was the background behind my opening remark on Providence and wishes? At age 7 and 8, my sister Fran and I whispered to each other, on the banks of the cold Yaquina river

that ran in front of our childhood home, that if we EVER got so old that we didn't want to rush down the bank and jump right in and start swimming, (the opposite being our 16 and 18 year old sisters who diddled their toes at the edge and ran screaming back to the blanket) that we wished to die first- - - life would hardly be worth living.

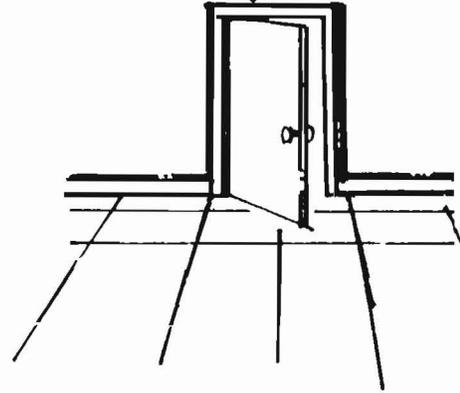
Was I wrong! I learned to scream too at cold streams and to realize that childhood memories and family, both personal and extended (of which you all are a vital and precious part), makes for a good life. God Bless all of you for your notes, love and support and 75th Birthday celebration. *.....Mother Maudie



Rare Buffalo knob owned
by Richard Hubbard

THE OPEN DOOR

by ray nemecc



The 1994 convention is over and we are already looking forward to next year. Liz Gordon will host the 1995 ADCA annual convention. It is tentatively set for the Pasadena, California, area. More information will be forthcoming in future issues of TDC.

Several of our regular features do not appear in this issue because of space limitations but will be back in the next issue. •

DEADLINE

All ads, material and articles for the November-December 1994 issue of **The Doorknob Collector** should be in the hands of the editors by October 15, 1994.



The Doorknob Collector

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual writer and not necessarily reflect those of the Board of Directors of ADCA or the editors of **The Doorknob Collector**.

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Victorian Milwaukee ...A Shadow of its Former Self

by Win Applegate

It was early morning on what was the Monday after the Convention. The Convention had ended officially, as has been the practice, after the auction . . . this time early Sunday afternoon.

It has become the habit of a few of us to stay another 24 hours. This allows a cushion just in case the auction balancing takes extra, gives a little time to 'wind down' and perhaps a quiet meal or two with some dear friends to critique the previous few days.

I stood by my seventh floor window, and watched a distant thunderstorm on the lake pass by. My window was on Wisconsin Avenue, a main thoroughfare in Milwaukee. In its earlier life, Wisconsin Avenue was called Grand Avenue and it, from all accounts, was a very appropriate name at the time as it was truly a grand 'Mansion Row'.

As with much of Milwaukee, and most other communities, large or small, if the "old" had survived, it began to disappear in the 1950's through the 70's. Ironically, my vantage point was a perfect example: a seven story concrete monolith that started its life as a Holiday Inn, undoubtedly at the expense of some classic Victorian home.

A lovely mansion had resided on the corner across from our quarters, now a Marquette University dorm. The home had been positioned so as to allow for a front yard on both streets and one could envision a low stone wall at the sidewalk with an iron fence on top of it.

How was it possible for me to 'envision' such a thing? Because the home with its marvelous roof line of turrets and gables and spires was still there, only apparent to those with a caring eye, high up on my side of the dorm. The lawn, the probable wall with its probable iron fence was gone in that "tear'em

down" age of the 1950-70's. All available lawn from sidewalk to mansion had been covered by an 'L' shaped commercial store fronting on both streets that was 'glued' to the mansion.

This had, undoubtedly, been a good commercial endeavor and one difficult for lovers of Victorian architecture to defend, but typical of what was pointed out to us on our tours around Milwaukee by Greg Filardo.



Greg Filardo

The Convention officially opened on Friday, but Greg led tours on Wednesday and Thursday. What did we see? From impromptu visits through private homes of friends to the late 1880's City Hall, we "did" Milwaukee, but no itemization here . . . just to say that the tours were very well planned and executed to tell a story. Wednesday's tour, with only about 20 people, allowed us to traipse through places that were impractical with the 45 on Thursday.

Both days were very full; fine surviving architecture, terra-cotta and stone, exquisite painted ceilings, the yellow brick indigenous to the Milwaukee area, blends of Victorian styles that the 'experts' of the group (of which I am not one) could argue about. It's fair to say, that you do not have to be an expert to enjoy Victorian styles. As mem-

bers of ADCA you surely know that.

Another slant on the tours involved things that are here today, but may be gone in another 20 years; such as the player-piano restorer in his loft with his harder-to-find-inventory in a world of disappearing skills needed to carry on his craft.

The annual ADCA Convention isn't about Victorian architecture . . . it just happens to relate to a segment of our interests. However, some of our host cities, Milwaukee and Elgin comes to mind as quick examples. A little history and a tour of any host city, regardless of its era of birth, is always appreciated.

One side of this Convention was as much Greg Filardo as it was Milwaukee. Greg is the City Historian and serves on various committees related to preservation and restoration. He knows his town and fights with a fervor to save the best of the old.

Filardo is the author of 'Old Milwaukee, A Historic Tour in Picture Postcards': an architectural history 1900-1925 through postcards of the time. This publication was made available to convention attendees.

Remember "The Beer That Made Milwaukee Famous"? Well, the city was and still is heavily into brewing. Next door to our dorm was the Pabst Mansion, now the Pabst Museum. This has not been restored . . . no abandoned building/"shooting gallery" with water damage and stripped hardware. This Victorian home has never had any really bad days. Now it is carefully maintained with daily tours. The Wednesday tour coincided with a filming crew and many of us made the local TV a few nights later.

(continued on page 8)

Early experiences in collecting doorknobs

Part III

by Steve Blumberg

First Dog Knob



The next place I will write of is where I found my first doggie knob. This was later on, in the mid 70's. By then I was traveling around the East. I would go into the torn out areas and look for empty buildings. I was quite successful for a while in selling antique commercial interiors. I would check out boarded up buildings. If they had a lot of cabinets and counters of vintage period that weren't badly broken up I would contact the property owner and pay him for what ever I could remove. Many of these people formerly had a business in the place and simply retired. The area being so bad they had quit paying the taxes on the place or were wanting to sell the ground to the redevelopment agencies. What I would give them, sometimes several thousand dollars, they looked at me like I was giving away money. I had several customers, then, who

were doing malls out west. They would have an architect design the store around the fixtures. I would sell. I could simply photo the interior, send it out with a price delivered, and get an affirmation before I would even buy it. Having to walk about and examine empty buildings in many cities in the east obviously let me to many doorknobs.

I was driving in Troy, New York, one afternoon I saw a block of old Brownstones that were empty and the site was being bulldozed down. It was near or below a hill where the Rensseler Polytechnic Institute is, for any New Yorkers who will remember this area. This block had some vacant buildings, some occupied and some already torn down.

I spotted one set of steps leading up to a three story Brownstone with only the front connecting wall still

standing. The place had been gutted by a recent fire. I saw on the door one of those flat Branford 1884 pattern knobs. The key hole was one of those early double key types with the keyhole cover so I thought I would stop and check it out. The steps were broken and the stoop was littered with debris and wine bottles. I went inside to remove the knob. On the inside was a Russell & Erwin dog knob. This was the first one I had seen. Inside was another set of doors with the glass broken out but right ahead of it, inside, the floor dropped into a chasm. The fire had completely gutted the structure to only the front wall. The floor I was standing on sagged down and drooped as I stepped on it. The inside door had another Branford knob. I got that as well as the first one and the doggie and the key hole. What bothered me, were there any more in the debris? Nobody will ever know.

This raises a question of legal ethics. As a Federal prisoner I am learning the hard way the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." What is the limit morally of taking something and depriving it of another. My collecting got the best of me, I will be the first one to admit. There were items I took that could have been enjoyed by others or were accessible to many more if they had wished but for myself they were denied access, but in all probability would have been destroyed by the wrecking ball.

But let us talk about the Doggie knob. For the legal purist, yes this knob, I am sure, belonged to somebody else. I believe, probably, the city of Troy, New York. It often is the practice of city redevelopment agencies, especially back then, to not sell or offer access to individuals to properties they



**First Russell & Erwin Dog Knob
A pleasant surprise**

owned. On a few occasions I was successful but that was a matter of knowing a buddy. Often the bureaucratic manner of submitting bids and doing it by the book or posting liability bonds, taking time and expense by oneself and the city, they simply didn't want to hear of it. This practice has slowed some now with the growing awareness of historic architecture. But back then to achieve the needed results you had to know a city inspector, a push cart street person, or a guy on the wrecking crew. I've dealt with them too and often with mechanical wrecking it is cost prohibitive to salvage item for item. Its buy George or Bud a 12 pack of beer and a twenty dollar bill and when the crew is gone the back door will be unlocked and "you are on your own, I don't know nothing."

This knob, in fact all the knobs, I have described are now ensconced in some ones loving collection, enjoyed and admired. If I hadn't acted in haste they would have been absolutely destroyed. Think about it. No amount of money will ever resurrect whatever doggie knobs were in the rubble of that Brownstone in Troy, New York.

As far as the loss I caused financially to Troy, New York, for losing that knob they didn't realize they had, the last I heard, they are still are meeting their payroll. If they are insolvent I am sure I didn't

cause it. In fact I've found that the way the government wastes they would have lost money selling me the knob with the bureaucratic protocol and paperwork they would have had to go through to do it by the book! Think about it. My minor legal transgression is giving a fellow collector pleasure today. The laws are such today that, speaking with legal purity now, I would, by my methods, be guilty of number of crimes federally. The entering to remove the knob is burglary. The buying it off the street push cart guy is receiving stolen goods, plus if you told him of the knobs and where it was, that is conspiracy, with five years in Federal prison. The buying it off the wrecker, being you are not an employee and wearing a hard hat and under his bond, could get the guy fired or his license revoked. And the city inspector friend, that is bribing a public official. Truly we are a nation of laws now, not of men!

Although my articles relate to scrounging for hardware, this was not my only source of doorknob 'finds.' I was a voracious buyer. I had many great finds in antique shops as well as trades with fellow collectors. More and more this became the way to go but in the early days not much could be found in shops. When you did find some gems, the prices were low. There wasn't the interest in collectables then.

If you know some of our early members, they, also, have some stories similar to mine to relate. The discovery of a door in a trashed out house sealed with a fine knob on it or a painted mangled door with a fine Russell & Erwin double keyhole plate. Rescuing it from total oblivian gave one a sense of accomplishing something. I am fortunate that I can vividly recall things like this and draw sketches so I can share them with you. •
(Sketches by Steve Blumberg)



**Walls going up,
doors being hung,
still needs hardware**

Frank and Rosalie McMenamain #393 are completing a restoration project. The house has the "Mantua" pattern doorknobs shown in a Reading Hardware Company catalog. The knob appears as a number H-425 in the fourfold symmetry section of Len Blumin's book, Victorian Decorative Art.

The McMenamains have been searching for the hardware for over two years. They went to the 1992 ADCA convention in Elgin in hopes of getting the needed hardware. The trip netted them one knob.

Now, two years later, they attended the Milwaukee convention and again obtained one knob. As Frank says, the walls are going up, the doors are being hung and they are still looking for six more of the Mantua doorknobs. They have been patient in the search but time is running out.

They have placed an ad in the "Doorknob Exchange" with the hope that some collectors or dealers may be able to help them. If you have doorknobs or other pieces of the set, he hopes you will contact him. Frank's address is 1338 N. Wicker Park, Chicago, IL 60622. His phone number is (312) 276-1663.

Correction

In our last issue (#66, July-August 1994) on page 4, three of the doorknobs shown were incorrectly marked. The knobs numbered O-160, O-161 and O-162 should have read O-167, O-168 and O-169.

OPENING DOORS

by Bill Eastwood

The lady from Tillamook lived her life
By working extraordinary hours
She cut hairs
Raised three heirs
And still had time for her flowers.

She looked with love, to the stars above
And recognized them as essential
With devotion
And plenty of motion
She knew she could reach her potential

As work reduced, she got a boost
Her dedication quickly increased
Talent to write
With expert insight
Allowed this passion to be fully released

Years it took, for her first book
To be published in the year seventy-six
An insider's dream
Galvanizing a team
It was a doorknob collector's fix

Soon there were more, than the hard-core
And a club was formed for the fond
From near and far
By plane and car
They come once a year to bond

This year they honor and offer a tribute
To the Knob Lady of Tillamook
From Motherhood haven
To doorknob maven
There are doors to open, if you look.

(Read by Bill Eastwood at the 1994 ADCA convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as the club celebrated the 75th birthday of his mother, Maud Eastwood.)

1994 Convention Awards

Yale & Towne

- 1st - Len Blumin
- 2nd - Homer & Mary Snow
- 3rd - Linda Smeltzer

Open Class

- 1st - Gene & Miriam DeLange (see top photo)
- 2nd - Megan Mann (see page 7)
- 3rd - Marge Bornino (bottom photo)

Louis Sullivan Award

Loretta Nemeo

Best of Show

Gene & Miriam DeLange



Convention Memories

by Debbie Fellenz

The tour bus driver bumping into a telephone pole and Gene DeLange offering to drive.....

The amazed looks on the people who thought they were left by the tour bus.....

Greg Filardo's indescribable house....

Florence Jarvis reaching into her secret money bag.....

Carlos Ruiz' evaporating table.....

Megan Mann's winning the display contest (her parents or grandparents didn't win, she was quick to point out).....

Members wiping their eyes at Maudie's tribute.....

Some members not recognizing Rich Kennedy in his Victorian outfit.....

The unusual accommodations at the college dorm.....

Carol Applegate asleep in the back of the room during the auction.....

Marge Bornino flirting shamelessly with the first auctioneer.....

Liz Gordon tirelessly packing hardware all day.....

Kathy Warming carrying the display in the room while husband Don carries his briefcase.....

The yellow brick that is common to Milwaukee.....

Wondering who was carrying a screwdriver on the tour.....

Some members wanting to be left at the Chocolate Company on the tour....

People curious about where Jeffrey Dahmer lived.....

Steve Rowe's delight at being asked a question at his first convention.....

Judy Stogner's search for buffalo hardware.....

Finally learning how to spell Milwaukee.....

And numerous trips to Leons for ice cream.....

Memories!!!



Barbara Menchhofer, Megan & Julie Mann

392

Membership number 392 belongs to Megan Mann, the youngest member of ADCA. Megan was six when she joined, in early August. She celebrated her seventh birthday on August 22.

Dressed in her handkerchief linen and lace Victorian dress, worn with long white stockings, she won the admiration of all the other ADCA members. In addition, she won the second prize award in the Open Class Division for her display of little knobs resting on a cushion of purple brocade being watch over by a Victorian doll.

Megan is a third generation ADCA member. She is the daughter of Joe and Julie Mann and granddaughter to Steve and Barbara Menchhofer. •



OBITUARY



Ethladel Magnus

Ethladel Magnus, a charter member of the **Antique Doorknob Collectors of America**, died May 27, 1994, at her home in Fort Myers, Florida. She was 87.

Mrs. Magnus was born October 4, 1906, at Escanaba, Michigan. She attended Oberlin College and was a graduate of the University of Michigan, class of 1928. She married Frederick Magnus on October 1, 1938. Prior to moving to the Fort Myers area in 1967, Mrs. Magnus was the secretary to the Director of the Museum of Arts and Science in Chicago, Illinois.

Collecting doorknobs was Fred's hobby but Ethladel took an active interest, attending the first national doorknob meeting at Waverly, Iowa, in 1981. They attended annual conventions regularly through 1990.

Fred often made "show and tell" presentations with doorknobs to various organizations in the Fort Myers area. Ethladel was always there to help. She was there, too, when Fred appeared on the TV show, "What's my line?" in 1971 and gave doorknob collecting national exposure.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by a son and daughter and their families. She was preceded in death by one son.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

by Steve & Barbara Menchhofer

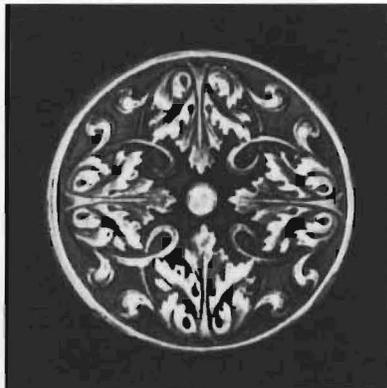
Usually we talk about the Archives, the Emil Miller Library, or what catalogs are available to the membership in this column. Today we would like to stray a little bit and talk about the **ADCA** convention.

We've just returned from Milwaukee, and we can't believe the convention is already over. Time goes by so quickly and we are never ready for it to end. It is like a big family re-union, seeing old friends, meeting new ones and catching up on all the doorknob news from the previous year.

Displays of doorknobs grace each table--for old-timers it is a mind-boggling scene. For newcomers, it must be totally awesome to see so many doorknobs in one room. This was our eleventh convention and we still are amazed to see all of the hardware.

Examining each doorknob, looking over the Archives table, trading, buying, and selling becomes the order of the day. To have the opportunity to discuss or ask questions about doorknobs with people like Maude Eastwood or Len Blumin is definitely a plus.

Besides being with some of the nicest people from all over the country, you discover what a learning experience an **ADCA** convention can be. Don't miss the next one!•



H-425

(Milwaukee continued from page 3)

For the 100th anniversary celebration, Greg Filardo has invested over 200 hours preparing an exhibit in the Mansion of hardware from 'lost' Milwaukee, complete in many cases with pictures of the original structures. Difficult to adequately describe, but complemented nicely with player piano sounds; restoring them is another of his interests.

Saturday evening started with a surprise party for Maud Eastwood on her 75th birthday (officially on Tuesday). Loretta Nemece orchestrated a **SUPERB** event with appearances by Maudie's children, a professionally prepared video memento . . . not many dry eyes in the house.

The display contest this year is covered elsewhere, a new award appeared: **BEST OF SHOW**. This was determined by the winner of other categories with the highest total point count.

First-time attendees this year were: Zane Mead, Stephen Rowe and Judith Stogner.

A rundown on the business side of the Convention will appear in other issues.

GREAT CONVENTION! Sorry you missed it.•

The Doorknob Exchange

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

WANTED. A-104 Flying bird. Will buy or trade for.

Bob Rodder (#167)
1203 Bruce Road
Oreland, PA 19075
PH: 215-885-1488

WANTED: Reading "Mantua," H-425.

I need six knobs and other miscellaneous hardware.
Frank McMenamin (#393)
1338 N. Wicker Park
Chicago, IL 6-622
PH: 312-276-1663