

*Hidden Treasures: Re-Assessing
South Carolina Silversmiths
and Related Artisans to 1861*



Catherine B. Hollan

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at The Charleston Museum,
360 Meeting Street, Charleston, SC,
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*Hidden Treasures: Re-Assessing
South Carolina Silversmiths
and Related Artisans to 1861*

This updated, enlarged study of Burton's 1942 and Ripley's 1991 classic *South Carolina Silversmiths* brings new light to the subject.

- Lives, Marks, and Silver Objects
- Contexts and Comparisons
- Connections among Artisans
- Re-attributions and Identifications

This authoritative study of South Carolina silver and silversmiths expands our knowledge of this topic through new identifications, new attributions, re-attributions, general research, and contextual comparisons and discussions.

Family records have established kinship, partnerships, arrivals, and removals. These clarified John and W.H. Ewan as father and son, Daniel and Thomas You as brothers, Lathrop & Wadsworth as two Connecticut young men embarking on a first business venture in Georgetown.

Attention to original ownership confirms several initial marks as belonging to early Charleston silversmiths.

National and international comparisons provide context, for example:

- the rarity of American made bottle labels
- the novelty of the wine trolley in 1800
- curious animated clocks in Lockwood's time
- the uses of an all silver cup and saucer
- enslaved silversmiths in 18th+19th century America
- engraved state currency
- silver horse racing trophies
- scholastic, horticultural, agricultural, and military medals.

Some pieces of silver have been known but mislabeled in museum and private holdings for sixty and eighty years. The odd J.&P. Mood teapot with extended lower reservoir is now identified as a rare silver veilleuse. The worn gold Columbian coin countermarked by William Gowdey is identified with its context of plugging low-weight coins for use in commerce before the U.S. Mint was established.

An Interesting Bond Boyd Brooch

By Peter Kaellgren



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

My article in the last SSC Journal focused on the workshops of Bond Boyd and Hedy Hill in Toronto. Bond Boyd produced excellent sterling silver jewelry. New and different pieces continue to turn up. One of the most interesting is this small brooch in the so-called "brutalist" style which was popular in the late 1960s/ 1970s. The whole frontal view (Fig. 1) shows the characteristics of the style where the precious metal is coarsely formed of sections that look like molten drops arranged in a somewhat abstract manner. The cabochon stone is likely to be an Australian black opal. Bond Boyd often used real precious and semi-precious stones, though they are likely to be small. The maximum dimension of the brooch is about 7 cm. The back view (Fig. 2) shows how the brooch was cast and includes the BOND BOYD mark on a small rectangular plaque soldered in one of the extensions of the brooch. The label in embossed paper covered in foil with yellow and black lacquer shows the lettering "BOND.BOYD/ MEANS/ STERLING SILVER." You will notice the old-fashioned coach with horses. In the early 20th century, wealthy customers with taste were often described as the "carriage trade." This was a reference to the 18th century when businesses like Christie's auction house in London, England, used to ask wealthy clients to attend the viewings. Their expensive carriages attracted attention and brought in customers. Foil labels like this were commonly used on better quality consumer goods in the 20th century right up to the 1970s. The author would be interested in hearing from anyone who finds unusual examples of Bond Boyd jewelry .

Please contact him at peterk@rom.on.ca

BOOK REVIEW

By Peter Kaellgren



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Most publications on British silver from the 1600s through to the 1800s concentrate on pieces that are exceptional for their size, craftsmanship, provenance, design and/or historical importance. Like the auction houses, silver scholars tend to focus largely on pieces worth thousands of pounds. These are the products of prominent silversmiths who registered as large workers or plate workers at Goldsmiths' Hall. A great many of the silversmiths were classified as spoon makers and small workers.

Silver lemon strainers are a useful and specialized example of the items that were mostly the product of small workers or one or more small workers (silversmith and piercing craftsman) supplying a strainer for a fashionable large worker. Until now, silver lemon strainers have not been the subject of any focussed, in-depth research. Dr. Adams is a teacher who holds a Ph.D. in biology and has conducted expeditions to the High Andes to study and collect butterflies. The results of his work resulted in respected scholarly publications. In 2011, his wife purchased some antique silver including a lemon strainer for their home. He immediately became fascinated with the form and the history of its use. With a biologist's mind set for organizing data, he began to gather all the information he could on silver lemon strainers from books, articles, auction catalogues, museum curators and dealers. His research and contacts culminated in this publication.

This book follows a method used in natural history but would also be advisable for decorative arts studies: carefully assembling all bits of information that have been published in auction catalogues (one of the best sources!) or articles since 1950 and collating it, looking for similarities, classifying it, and coming up with an over-all picture; just like scholars who have spent considerable time studying the trees, who then put the information together and determine what the forest looks like. By doing that, it is possible to make discoveries and to better interpret and appreciate artifacts.

Dr. Adams' beautifully illustrated book is based on data from 900 individual silver lemon strainers. Historical sources reveal that these were often referred to as "orange" or "punch" strainers. Punch was a mixed drink served hot in a bowl. It was introduced via trade from the Indian subcontinent in the 1600s. Punch consisted of five ingredients: water, sugar, alcohol, spices, and a citrus fruit juice. Strainers were needed to remove the pith and seeds from the juice.



George I lemon strainer, London 1724, by John Albright, Toronto private collection

Crest: Carew, most likely owner: Sir William Carew of Anthony.

Many thanks to Dr. Adams for more info on this lemon strainer and Peter Cameron for identifying the crest

Silver was the preferred material because it did not react to the acids in the juice, and it was appropriate for the formal occasions when punch was usually served. Dr. Adams classifies the strainers by form, date (as determined from hallmarks or the working dates of a provincial silversmith), style of handle, pierced designs in the bowl, and place of manufacture. London, where the most fashionable silversmiths had their shops, produced 643 of the examples studied with lesser numbers coming from the English provinces, Ireland, Scotland, and America. Lemon strainers are almost unknown in European silver, possibly because punch was not popular on the Continent and likely consumed primarily in ports visited by the English.

Using a computer graphics program, Dr. Adams was able to document the patterns pierced through the bowl and shows these in sequence. Up to the 1770s, these would have been laboriously executed by hand. By then, it was possible to pierce thin silver using a die press. There are also tables showing the various styles of handles that appeared as the form evolved. The author helpfully even provides information on repaired and spurious examples.

I have personal experience with Mike Adams' research methods. He contacted me by e-mail because of an article I had published in 2002 on a strainer that had belonged to Princess Amelia, the youngest daughter of George III and Queen Charlotte (ROM Accession number 993.53.127). Jennifer Kinnaird, the Technician in the European Department at the Royal Ontario Museum, very helpfully provided photos of this and the other two strainers in the Museum Collection and the marks. The Royal Ontario Museum is fortunate to own three English silver lemon strainers which document the evolution of the form from c. 1690 to 1733/34 and ultimately to 1794. The first and last were given by Mrs. Norman S. Robertson in 1993.

Based on his documentation for other similar examples, Mike was able to correctly identify the makers for the 1733 and 1794 strainers. Maker's marks are often distorted or damaged when the piercing is done. It could be extremely helpful if the silversmiths making strainers could be noted as group in an updated version of Grimwade's *London Goldsmiths*. That would make it easier to interpret partial marks on strainers, given the different datable phases of style and form, and would provide a fuller picture of the products of the small worker.

I can recommend *Silver Lemon Strainers 1686-1846* as an authoritative guide. Lemon strainers are intriguing examples of craftsmanship and affordable for the collector of more modest means. I find them much more interesting than bottle tickets and other silver wine paraphernalia. The book provides an excellent model of what a present-day collector with well honed research methods can achieve and add to our knowledge. This publication also has the potential to be useful for silver scholars who are studying specialized craft processes such as the pierced patterns found on casters, baskets, and other forms.

Dr. Peter Kaellgren is curator emeritus of the European Department at the Royal Ontario Museum, where he has worked since 1972. He has lectured and written widely and coordinated the Annual Decorative Arts Symposium at the ROM from 1991 to 2008.

AD space

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