

# Majolica Matters!

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE MAJOLICA INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Originally Published- *Summer 1994*

This online version has minor omissions from the original

## **Society's Sixth Annual Meeting Held in Hartford, Connecticut**

This year, the sun shone on the attendees at the Society's annual meeting weekend, but the winds were also blowing at Brimfield -- the huge outdoor antiques show in nearby Massachusetts. Despite those buffeting winds, many of our members were still able to make a purchase or two. Late Saturday afternoon at the Sheraton in downtown Hartford, the official events of the Society's weekend began with a cocktail party featuring "Barter and Buy", which was ably hosted by a very personable and lovely member from Tulsa, Oklahoma, Phylis Hays. Many introductions were made, new friends found, and old friends were rediscovered. The cocktail hour was also an opportunity for those who wanted it to ask some of the Society's experts about pieces in their personal collections.

Pictures of a number of collections were also passed around.

At 7 p.m. the group filed into the hotel's ballroom for dinner, which began with Michael Strawser, the Society's President, leading several pre-dinner "majolica exercises". In the first, everyone stood one at a time and introduced themselves to the room by name and city. (We all know that Russell and Mary Keith are from Cole Porter's hometown, Peru, Indiana!) The second exercise began with the entire room standing and then sitting down by 5-year increments of collecting: 5 years, 10 years, and so on.

Following dinner, Polly Wilbert of Salem, Massachusetts, and John Collins of Saratoga Springs, New York joined in

a tribute to Society member/dealer John Fletcher, who passed away in February. John was the co-chairman of the Society's Archives and was recognized for his many contributions to the Society, especially through his research into majolica. Polly and John Collins announced the establishment of The John Crockett Fletcher Memorial Research Fund, which will serve as a vehicle for the Society to continue John's research into majolica.

Marilyn Karmason, noted author on majolica and the Society's Secretary, introduced the evening's speaker William Gates, Jr., the Curator of History at the Ohio Historical Society, who spoke on the potteries of East Liverpool, Ohio, especially those of George Morley, and on Morley's production of majolica. An edited version of Mr. Gates' talk is reproduced for you in this issue of the newsletter.

Attending with his wife Wallis from their home in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Marshall Katz, who has been doing extensive research into and publication of information about the 19th-century followers of Bernard Palissy, spoke briefly on his work and the advent of his personal collection and the rewards he has found as he has pursued more information about Palissyware.

The topping to the evening, "Majolica Discoveries" was provided by Marilyn Karmason and Joan Stacke who showed slides of newly discovered majolica as well as unusual pieces such as a recently purchased unglazed game dish. On Sunday morning the Society's business meeting convened and the agenda was dispatched with unusual speed. Joan Stacke presented the Treasurer's Report,

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which showed that as of April 1, 1994 the Society's membership stood at 310 and the treasury had a balance of \$19,916, which after expected payables would stand at \$6,490. There was one extraordinary expense this year -- the Society's new full-color brochure - which cost \$5,071 for 20,000 copies.

The Society's dues are expended as follows:

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Advertising        | 20% |
| Newsletter         | 38% |
| Office Expenses    | 24% |
| Convention Support | 4%  |
| Remainder          | 14% |

Joan also reported that the initial balance for the John Crockett Memorial Research Fund stands at \$935 and noted that the Society's budget for the coming year was being established.

Then, there was much lively discussion about the location - Atlanta, Georgia -- and the timing -- April -- of the 1995 annual meeting and the likely member attendance and dealer representation at that meeting site. The Executive Committee noted that we are committed to holding the annual meeting in an area of the country for members who do not live in the Northeast where our annual meetings have been held for the past 5 years.

## Full-Color Brochure!

Enclosed with your copy of the newsletter should be two of the Society's brochures. The concept of a brochure was the subject of much discussion over the years and it has now become a reality. Our goal is to use the brochure to spread the word about the Society and its purposes and to increase our

membership across the country and in Canada, England, and France.

We hope you will be pleased with the results of our efforts in this regard. If you would like more copies of the brochure to distribute, (We've got lots!) they can be acquired by contacting: Marilyn Karmason at the Society's New York address, Polly Wilbert in Salem, Massachusetts, or Michael Strawser in Wolcottville, Indiana. We ask that you put your name or some identifying information on the brochure as you distribute them, especially if you're a dealer, so that we can track how the brochures are used most successfully. We have plenty. Don't be shy about requesting a bundle or two (125/bundle)!!

## Nominating Committee for 1995 Elections

Also at the annual meeting in Hartford, the Executive Committee appointed John Collins of Saratoga Springs, N.Y., as Chair of the Society's Nominating Committee. As a matter of information for members not having a copy of the Bylaws at hand, the relevant sections relating to the nomination process are quoted in Dart below:

Article IV, Section 1: "The Officers Of this Society shall be: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Editor of the Newsletter, Chairman of the Annual Meeting and four Delegates-at-Large, chosen to increase geographic representation on the Executive Committee.

MIS Majolica Matters Summer 1994

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These above officers constitute the Executive Committee of the Society."

Article IV, Section 2: "Terms of office shall run for three consecutive years The executive Committee will select the Chairman of the Nominating Committee and two committee members. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of candidates at the annual meeting, beginning at the meeting of 1992, and continuing each succeeding third year."

The Bylaws (complete copies of which are available to any member from the Secretary upon request) also state that outgoing officers may be nominated for re-election or for election to other positions on the Executive Committee, that candidates may be nominated and seconded from the floor at the annual meeting, that the election shall be by majority vote of members present at the meeting and that the voting shall be by closed ballot.

But much of that lies ahead of us at next year's meeting in Atlanta. Right now, we need some members to step forward to assist John with the Nominating Committee work. Joan Stacke of New York City and Phyllis Hays of Tulsa, Oklahoma have been asked to serve, but and to get out the vote are needed. One proposed Committee goal is inclusively: more members to be included in MIS management. Interested members should forward a note advising of their interest in serving on the Nominating Committee either to Marilyn Karmason, MIS Secretary, at the Society's New York address or directly to John Collins in care of Maiolica Matters. John advises that there ought to be no travel and little personal cost involved in

serving on the Committee since all of the Committee's communications will be by fax, phone, or mail.

John also points out that now is the perfect time for MIS members to consider becoming involved in the Society by participating in the upcoming triennial election. Although John and the Committee have not yet canvassed the current officers on their desires / intentions to run for re-election next year, he notes that members attending this year's annual meeting had quite a lot of ideas and that there may be some strong candidates for increased participation among the membership. Involvement as co-chairs or participating in committee work may be just the ticket for members getting started.

Election to an office in the Society brings with it the opportunity as well as the responsibility to attend or participate in most of the meetings of the Executive Committee. The geography of these meetings is not immutable, by any means; nothing except mutual convenience governs the site of the Executive Committee meetings. It is theoretically possible that if the Board were, for example, half eastern and half western, a quarterly meeting could be held in a Midwestern location -- hopefully in conjunction with a majolica-related event. Travel to and from Executive Committee meetings is an individual responsibility at this time and is currently not reimbursed.

Telephone conference calls may be used so that Executive Committee members who cannot travel to the meetings are nevertheless fully and validly included in them, so don't let geography limit your options!

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But first, we must have a slate of candidates to carry the MIS on into the future and to continue to support its members and programs. So, please, get your letter to Marilyn volunteering to join John, Joan, Phyllis, and others on the Nominating Committee and also consider participating yourself - or suggest to a fellow member that he or she consider becoming involved. Serving as an officer/working members of the Executive Committee or on a functional group (such as Nominating, Standards, Bylaws, Newsletter or Archives) is a great way to stay more closely involved with majolica year 'round.

The Nominating Committee will keep members informed of its progress through future issues of Majolica Matters.

## Standards Committee

A Standards Committee has been appointed by the Executive Committee of the M.I.S. to establish guidelines for transactions between Society members, between members and dealers, and for the Society's responsibilities outside the M.I.S. In accordance with the by-laws, the chairman of the Standards Committee was appointed by the Society's Executive Committee. Members of the Standards Committee were then appointed at the Society's business meeting on May 15, 1994. Marilyn Karmason, Secretary and Executive Committee member, will chair the committee. Members of the committee include: "Majolica John" and Beckie Boraten, long-time collectors of Etruscan majolica; Mary Rossi, dealer and collector; Randi Schwartz, dealer

and restorer of majolica; and Charles Washburne, dealer.

Since its establishment in 1989, the Society has grown from a membership of 46 to a current membership of 310, and the governance of this group will be improved by the work of a standards committee. As in all organizations, there are matters of conflict that affect the membership. It is the hope of the M.I.S. that, with the support of our membership, guidelines will be established and accepted to allow the M.I.S. to function in as collegial an atmosphere as possible.

Topics to be considered would include disclosure practices between dealer and customer; guidelines about sales, whether at meetings or through advertisements in Maiolica Matters; conflicts of interest; use of the M.I.S. membership directory; and any other topics suggested by the membership.

Members of the M.I.S. are encouraged, urged, and entreated to send to the Committee matters pertaining to standards. The Committee welcomes questions and descriptions of interactions that are in need of clarification. Letters should be addressed to:

Standards Committee  
Majolica International Society  
Suite 103  
1275 First Avenue  
New York, NY 10021

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## **Majolica International Society 1995 Annual Meeting**

The Executive Committee is pleased to announce that the Society's 1995 Annual Meeting will be held in Atlanta, Georgia over the second weekend of April 1995, Saturday and Sunday, April 8 and 9. The meeting will be held in conjunction with two monthly antiques shows: Scott Antique Markets' Antiques and Collectibles Show at the Atlanta Expo Center, which features 1200 dealers, and the Lakewood Antiques Market, which is held at the Lakewood Fairgrounds in south Atlanta, with 1400 booths.

In future issues of Majolica Matters, more information about the annual meeting will be forthcoming, but we wanted you to have the dates for next year's meeting now so that you could plan to attend. We will also be reporting to you on special airfares as well as on the hotel for our 1995 weekend.

We are excited to be going to Atlanta, which has much to offer the Society as both a convention venue and an airline hub. And if you have ever watched the Masters Golf Tournament in Augusta, you may have some idea of how wonderful spring is in Georgia. (Moreover, this venue will give us an opportunity to check out Atlanta in advance of the 1996 Summer Olympics, which will also be held in that fair southern city.) We are looking forward to seeing many new faces in Atlanta and hope that this location will be convenient for any number of Society members who have not been able to come to the eastern locations of previous annual meetings.

It's a great pleasure to report that we have been as busy as ever since the beginning of the year, and that Minton and George Jones continue to be most in demand, from garden seats, stick stands and jardinières down to strawberry dishes, sardine boxes and sweetmeats, and very closely followed by the minor makers, sometimes of the major pieces.

A surprise has been the growing interest in the distinctive branch of majolica known as

Palissy ware. The feature in the Winter 1993 newsletter had some very helpful notes by Marshall P. Katz and by Robert Lehr, but it had started before that and it may soon be quite a problem to keep up with the demand. Understandably the interest centers on the remarkable French pieces, of Avisseau, Thomas Sergent and the Landais family and others, but there is a constant demand for the imaginative products of Cunha and of Mafia at Caldas da Rainha near Lisbon.

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Photo on left: A dish in the style for which he is most famous, by Bernard Palissy (c. 1510-1590) 20 1/2 x 16"

Photo on right: The reverse of the Palissy dish showing the snake, fishes, and frogs worked through from the underside.

A remarkable find, very rare on the market, is an original Bernard Palissy dish (born c. 1510, died 1590). Compare the photograph with the Landais piece of c. 1850 on Page 2 of the Winter 1993 newsletter, and although the 16th-

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century piece is nearly twice the size, the similarity is most striking.

The big surprise and the big difference can be seen by turning the Bernard Palissy piece over, when we find that the snake, fishes and frogs are modeled initially by working them through from the underside. This method must have been quite time consuming not to say tricky, and it is small wonder that Palissy's 19th-century followers opted for the simpler and quicker operation of making the reptiles separately and then arranging them artfully on a dish.

The Victoria & Albert Museum in London has several Bernard Palissy pieces made the same way and, most interestingly, they have not only his ewer and dish in more "classical" style, but also the Minton copies made with such exactitude in 1858. These will be found in the Karmason & Stacke book on Page 41, and very covetable too!

Ian Smythe  
Britannia, London

## Majolica in Atlanta by Valerie DiSpaltro

As a majolica enthusiast, I was excited to have the opportunity to go to two shops in Atlanta, during a recent trip. I visited two well known dealers: Joseph Konrad Antiques and Heirloom Wicker and Pine. They are both located at Miami Circle, a street lined with upscale antique shops and decorative arts dealers.

At Joseph Konrad Antiques, I was fortunate to meet John Tribble, a fellow majolica enthusiast, who was friendly, gracious, and very helpful. He works at this elegant antique shop and was kind

enough to take the time to chat with me. The shop mostly sells English pieces, which are often simply marked "Origin - England." Many pieces were unsigned, but the shop also carries Wedgwood, Minton, Portuguese Palissyware, and other well-known makers. The price range was usually under \$500 with the bulk of the prices at \$125 to \$275, although I did spy a Wedgwood game dish at \$2,450.

Up the street is Heirloom Wicker and Pine, owned by Majolica International Society dealer, Gail Dearing. This shop carries more signed pieces by makers such as Samuel Lear, Fielding, George Jones, Minton, Wedgwood, Brown-Westhead Moore & Co., as well as various French makers. Heirloom carries hundreds of pieces and has customers throughout the country. The sales staff was very friendly and I spent a very pleasant hour or so feasting my eyes. Their price range is broader because of the larger number of pieces. I saw a Fielding platter for \$495 and a small George Jones basket weave dish for \$695.

Atlanta is a great place to visit (and to live I am told). So, if you find yourself there, I hope you will also find time to visit these charming shops.

**Joseph Konrad Antiques**  
693 Miami Circle, NE; Atlanta  
Ph: 404-261-3224

**Heirloom Wicker and Pine**  
409 Miami Circle, NE; Atlanta  
Ph: 404-233-6333

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## Annual Meeting Presentation

**Editor's Note: The following is an edited version of the presentation (without the slides) that William Gates made to the Society at our annual meeting in May. To help illustrate some of the points herein, reference may be made to similar material in current books on majolica. These references will be set off in brackets [].**

**George Morley:**

### Majolica In The Crockery City

by William Gates, Jr., Ohio Historical Society

The making of pottery in East Liverpool, Ohio began in 1840 when James Bennett, an English potter from Derbyshire, established a small rockingham and yellow ware pottery there on the banks of the Ohio River. Scores of other English potters followed him to East Liverpool both for its rich clay deposits and for its prime location for shipping products to distant markets on the Ohio River as well as on the new railroads. From 1845 to 1865, many pieces of rockingham and yellow-ware were produced from this local clay.

(Rockingham is the name of a glaze containing manganese, which over yellow pottery achieves a rich brown color. This glaze was originally developed at the pottery on the grounds of the estate of the Earl of Rockingham in England.) At times, these early potters also added colored oxides to their glazes.

In 1844, George Garner, a potter in the town, wrote to friends in England, "East Liverpool is full of clay and coal. ... I

find there are markets to receive every cup of ware that is made. ... It is impossible for you to starve. ... Provisions are very cheap.

[**Editor's Note:** In her book on majolica, Victoria Bergeson reports, "By the middle of the nineteenth century, this was a center for the manufacture of useful wares and three-quarters of the inhabitants were English. English social traditions were maintained in the home, the community at large and, most importantly to us, in the potteries."]

Following the Civil War, many changes took place in East Liverpool, both in terms of its pottery industry as well as in the community itself, and the town matured as an urban center supported by its burgeoning industry. Led by Knowles, Taylor and Knowles, many East Liverpool potteries abandoned rockingham and yellow-ware in favor of white ware which was considered a superior product. At first, the white ware products made in the Crockery City were plain, undecorated ironstone wares. Following the introduction of white ware, however, ceramic production increased rapidly until East Liverpool led the nation in the production of ceramic products. Supported by protective tariffs [See also, Dawes, p. 184, Note 6-1] and the Republican politics of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the local pottery industry continued to prosper. By the 1890s, 30 potteries employing thousands of potters were located in East Liverpool. These firms produced 50 percent of the general table and toilet ware manufactured in the United States - - \$5.5 million dollars per year worth of pottery.

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Not only was East Liverpool maturing and changing the entire world was taking on a new look. The consumer market, the whole range of attitudes and tastes, were undergoing fundamental changes. Now, heavy yellow ware was still acceptable for the kitchen or the pantry, but not for the dining room, bedroom, or parlor.

One of the English potters who immigrated to the United States from Staffordshire and who participated in these changes was George Morley. Initially, Morley worked for a short time in Baltimore and later in Madison County, Illinois. He arrived in East Liverpool in 1852 [at the age of 23] and worked in several small potteries.

In 1857, Morley formed a partnership with William Flentke and James Godwin and they purchased a small pottery in East Liverpool. The new firm of Morley, Godwin and Flentke produced rockingham and yellow ware queensware, and became one of the leading firms in the city.

George Morley returned to England in 1871 and came into possession of recipes for bodies and glazes to make white ware. Following successful experiments with a variety of clays and glazes, the firm began construction of a new pottery and sold its old buildings to another firm. By 1874, Morley, Godwin and Flentke had become the third firm in the city to produce white ironstone.

Several years later, in August 1878, Morley left that firm to begin a new pottery in Wellsville, Ohio in partnership with Harmer Michaels and I. B. Clark. The town of Wellsville, only three miles south of East Liverpool, donated the

land and several thousand dollars to Morley for this new pottery. By September 1879, the new firm, Morley and Co., was in operation and producing a kiln per week of decorated white ironstone, including the moss rose pattern. Soon after production began, the advertised its new "Pioneer" shape in toilet ware. Some of the decorations were very elaborate and revealed a skill rarely achieved by potters in the Midwest.

At about the same time as Morley's new pottery was getting underway, William Colclough, an English manufacturer of majolica, started a small pottery in East Liverpool to produce majolica wares. No examples of his product are known, and within a year that fledgling pottery was no longer in operation.

In March 1881, the local newspaper announced that experiments with majolica at Morley's Pioneer Pottery were completely successful. The new ware, the article stated, was admirable from every point of view. Many marked pieces from this pottery have been found with the word "majolica" misspelled with two I's rather than one. [See illustration, Dawes, *Majolica*, p. 168, Fig. 297.]

Colored sales broadsides of George Morley's from 1882 illustrate shapes made by a progressive company. These sales materials also noted that Morley sold "American Majolica." Today, there are a number of examples of Morley majolica in the collection of the Museum of Ceramics in East Liverpool, and they are representative of the vivid colors Morley used in his majolica. One reporter from a national newspaper said of one of Morley's marine motifs, "...



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colors true as life, and scales, fins, and eyes rendered with remarkable fidelity."

In the late 19th century, Charles Locke Eastlake became an important influence on taste and design trends. His book, *Hints on Household Taste*, first published in 1868 in London, saw six editions published in the United States by 1861. Eastlake advocated designs based on nature and promoted the use of flowers, foliage, creatures, and grasses as decorative motifs. He said, "The act of the decorator is to typify not to represent the work of nature."

Many pieces of Morley's majolica do just that. However, this embodiment of nature in the decorative arts was not new, Eastlake was echoing the beliefs of the Aesthetic Movement and its proponents, John Ruskin and William Morris. They advocated a return to the natural world rather than face the monotony of industrialization. Morley's majolica shaped like biting fish and watchful owls certainly conformed to this philosophy. [See illustrations, Karmason/Stacke, p. 164]

One observer of this period noted in 1882 that Morley's majolica on a No.1 white granite body was the only majolica produced in this manner. Another American majolica, he said, was on a cheap low-grade body.

In April 1884, the partnership forming Morley and Co. was dissolved when Morley sold his interest and left. He subsequently purchased the pottery of West, Hardwick and Company in East Liverpool and began to make repairs and alterations to that facility. Within months George Morley was once again producing majolica, this time as Morley

and Sons. In addition to his line of majolica at this time were toilet ware sets, including a toothbrush holder, with an oak leaf motif, which Morley used extensively.

All, however, did not go smoothly for Morley's third firm. A major fire destroyed the pottery and damaged much of his inventory. Although it was rebuilt, this pottery was never as profitable as before. By the fall of 1891, Morley and Sons was assigned to bankruptcy. The four-kiln pottery was closed and 60 workers lost their jobs. By the following spring, the pottery was sold, as was Morley's house. All of the molds used by the firm, estimated to be worth thousands, went for a mere \$51.00. George Morley was penniless but had satisfied his creditors.

So what does one do when their kilns are cold and their professional life is practically destroyed? Most people do not do what George Morley did: He became the mayor of East Liverpool in 1894. Following his term as mayor, he was elected to the office of Justice of the Peace. Finally, in November 1896, George Morley died of a heart attack at the age of 67. He was survived by his wife and by his five sons who were all connected to the pottery industry.

George Morley's legacy is still alive today thanks to people like you who honor him by collecting his pottery. The twenty-some pieces of his majolica in the Ceramics Museum in East Liverpool serve as testimony to Morley's skill and to that of the other enterprising entrepreneurs of the East Liverpool potteries of that time.



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September 1. Please, please, please, if you intend to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity, send in your reservation deposit to Ed Cotton at Hammersmith & Co. (The tour schedule and reservation form is reprinted in this issue of the newsletter for the last time. Because of the tour dates, October 12-21, this material will not appear in the fall issue of Maiolica Matters.)

Having spoken to Ed Cotton today, we want to reiterate how vast the antiquing opportunities are on this tour. Ed emphasized that when the group attends the huge Newark & Nottingham antiques show, it would be an "incredible miracle" to be able to complete the entire show and, second, that it would be extremely unlikely to be put in a competitive shopping situation with other tour members as there are just so many opportunities to buy. Moreover, it has been Ed's experience over his many years of having led these tours that there is just such a diversity of collecting that the individuals on his tour do not find themselves shopping for the same things - like minded majolica collectors or not.

Although it is still in the very early stages, we have also had an inquiry from Bonhams, the London auction house, as to whether they might host the tour group for a reception at some point on the tour schedule. We will be responding affirmatively and think that this will also be a very attractive event on the tour and likely to occur on the day the group arrives in London at the outset of the tour.

If you have any questions about the tour, please call Ed Cotton. If he is not immediately available, please leave him a message and he will call you back. For

hotel this week and will be glad to provide you those details. The Society will not be sponsoring this tour on an annual basis and the invitation to see Frogmore is a rare opportunity.

Don't miss out!