

# THE SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



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SUTTON, MASSACHUSETTS

SUTTON'S STEPPING STONES  
Carilyn E. Philbrook, *Editor*

SEPTEMBER 1977  
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## HAND PAINTED CHINA

by BETTY PENTLAND

According to local witnesses, Edna Houghton Hough did hand painting of china in Sutton. The studio where she worked was built by her dentist father and called "the shop." The homestead located at the junction of Manchaug and Torrey Roads, is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Keneth Hoover.

Recently, I observed a porcelain dish, hand painted by Edna Hough and owned by George L. Brennan of Manchaug Road. This beautiful dish is a fine example of her work. China painting is done on blanks, which are delicate white porcelain pieces. This one was imported from Germany and was so marked on the bottom. The inside was given a mother of pearl glaze; the outside an iridescent blue; and the slightly scalloped top edge was trimmed with gold. Perhaps other Suttonians have pieces that Edna has hand painted. If so, you have a choice hand painted treasure. Most china painting lessons are taught privately.

The term, chinaware, has been used as early as the seventeenth century to describe imported porcelain into England from China. The early discovery of kaolin in China enabled the production of true porcelain from about the 9th Century A.D. After kaolin was found near Limoges, France and also in Germany and Cornwall, England, Europeans began to produce fine porcelains and chinawares. In the United States, the principal sources of kaolin are in North Carolina, Georgia and Florida.

The evolution of pottery making has been a universal craft. The early potter created his wares almost entirely from products available in the local environment—clay was dug from the earth, the kiln was built from local stone and fired by wood from nearby timber. As a small family industry, the craft was handed down from father to son through several generations.

Shaping pottery was usually done by guiding layers of clay, pressing coils, using a plaster mold into which clay is forced or poured and allowed to set, or, the most common technique, on the potter's wheel powered by hand or foot.

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## A PATRIOT OF SUTTON

by DOROTHEA WATERS MORAN

My Father often told me about Jason Waters, a native of West Sutton, a scholar of the old school, a person of many interests and a man whom Father admired greatly even though he was often amused by him. Jason was quite a philosopher and a natural orator and he believed in pronouncing every word exactly as it was spelled; the town of Palmer, for instance he called "Pall-mer" and Bowdoin College was "Bo-doyne."

Jason was the oldest of seven children, all born at the old Aldrich Mill place [now Sutton Falls] on the Manchaug Road in West Sutton. He was born in 1824; at the time I speak of, he was a short stocky man with a full face, a high forehead, large features and a flowing beard, and he had a forceful and important way of expressing his opinions. He never married and lived most of his days in West Sutton and died at the ripe old age of 83. In 1862 he was elected to the Mass. General Court, representing Sutton. He introduced a bill appropriating \$500,000 for small arms, limiting the choice to the Springfield pattern. There was opposition to this, and at first the bill failed. But on permission of the Chair, the member from Sutton actually demonstrated a number of breech loading rifles, and his determination carried the day.

Like so many members of the Waters Family, Jason was musical. He served on the Sutton School Committee and prepared many an excellent musical program for Sutton graduating exercises. He played the violin and with its aid he taught singing, not only in Sutton but in various other schools in the county. As he was fond of walking and considered it excellent for the health, he used to trudge from town to town, always with his violin. He had a weekly singing class in the old Masonic Hall on the second floor of the West Sutton Hotel, a building which most unfortunately burned down in 1915. This building was an important one in its day. It stood directly opposite the West Sutton Baptist Church and housed not only the said Masonic Hall but also the West Sutton Library, and being on the Turnpike, exactly half way between Hartford and Boston, it served at one time as the stage coach stop for changing horses. [more about the Hotel in the June 1975 Issue of Bulletin]

Jason became Editor of the Fall River Daily Times, and he travelled extensively throughout the United States and Canada as representative of one of the New England Journals. As he died when I was a very small child I have only childish recollections of him, enhanced of course by my Father's stories. Father saw a good deal of Jason and especially appreciated his interest in the history and well-being of Sutton and particularly his amusing tales of some of the townspeople. Callers on Jason were invariably served with some excellent home-made wine with doughnuts and cheese, and were regaled with one or two amusing anecdotes. One of these was about the parson who enjoyed wine and on occasion overindulged. Some of the members of his congregation became apprehensive and after considerable hesitation two men were delegated to call on the parson with a word of warning. After a most pleasant visit, replete of course with wine, the two finally but hesitatingly came to the point. To which the parson replied: "Gentlemen, if my soul can't stand what my stomach craves, they can both go to hell together."



## HAND PAINTED CHINA (continued)

The craft of building by hand or molding creates the ceramic pieces. By this craft our seventeenth century forebears recognized porcelain as the most patrician product of the potter's art and paid homage to its worth. Porcelain is the highest, the most precious and the most highly organized expression of the potter's art. Porcelain is a thing separate and distinct from pottery because of well defined physical properties. The edges of thin pieces should be translucent. It is also transparent.

The fine art is in hand painting the design. All painted china is not necessarily fine art. The design must be suited to the shape or use; the decoration suited to the ware. Decorated plates, vases and other "useful" items should be shown as display pieces or wall hangings. Whether hand painting china is a hobby or creative expression, muted shades of color are used, and a soft, silky technique is used, giving a poetic rendition to the subject. This requires shading and firings after each application of color.

People of every continent have told something of themselves through pottery and ceramic designs. Historic events are recorded and religious symbols used. Often nature is the jumping off point for creative design, using such things as flowers, birds, fruit, animals, acorns, pine cones, shells, fish, game, butterflies and people.

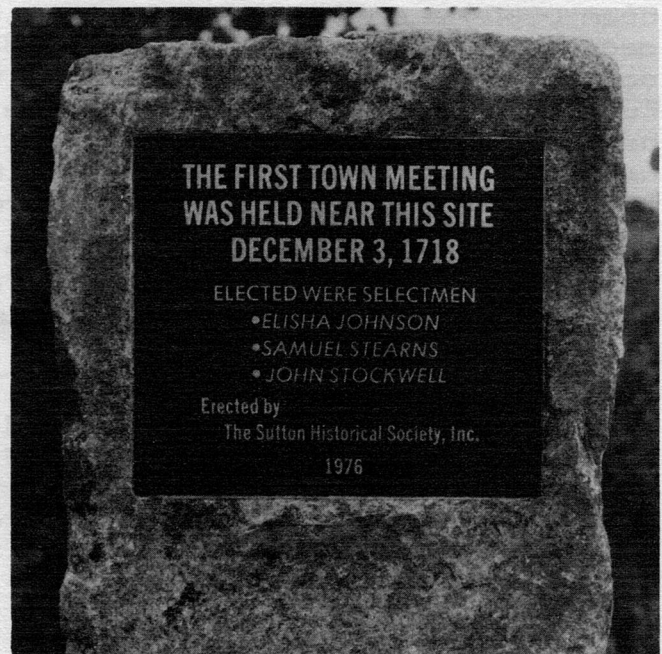
Conventional designs for mass produced dinnerware can be applied in the form of ceramic decals before firing. Other methods are spraying with underglaze color, printing a pattern outline, and adding brush strokes of color. Liquid gold trim is brushed on before firing a second time.

Today's ceramic designs include a Currier and Ives four seasons scene on a shaving mug, a dancing ballerina on a vase, or Mickey Mouse, Winnie the Pooh, and Charlie Brown with Snoopy for a child's dinnerware set. But what is more pleasing than painting your own china with a delicately shaded flower or a bright bird.

SUTTON, AUGUST 22, 1977--THE FIRST MEETING HOUSE PLAQUE DEDICATION WAS HELD IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE ORIGINAL SITE.

AMONG THE INVITED GUESTS WERE:  
STATE REP. JOHN DRISCOLL, SUTTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN, CHMM. WALLACE E. JOHNSON, JOSEPH A. AUGER AND FRANCIS D. DUDLEY.

THE PLAQUE, DONATED BY THE SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS MOUNTED ON A STONE SUPPLIED BY WILFRED STOCKWELL, AND WAS PRESENTED TO THE TOWN OF SUTTON BY THE SOCIETY'S PRESIDENT DONALD KING.



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## A PATRIOT OF SUTTON (continued)

Jason was always fond of a good story, but he hated pretext and he had down-to-earth remedies for minor ills, such as sawing wood for indigestion. He enjoyed good conversation and liked to philosophize about education and about ethics; at the same time he was an active and public spirited citizen, interested always in the welfare of the town - a man of whom Sutton should be proud.

## HAND PAINTED CHINA (continued)

Glazing was used on the inside of common household ware to prevent it from being porous and to help resist chemical action. Decorating the outside of the pieces was done by use of thin slip of clay and water applied with a brush. Later, stencils were used and wooden stamps were carved to imprint the name of the maker into the pieces. Many grey stoneware crocks and jugs were salt glazed and decorated with hand-brushed cobalt blue. Salt-glaze stoneware was produced when salt was thrown by handfuls or shovelled into the fuel or firebox of the kiln. At a high temperature the salt changed to vapor, producing a transparent glaze and an orange-peel like covering.

Some of the most widely recognized pottery in America was produced at Bennington, Vermont. In 1793, John Norton and Christopher Fenton experimented with glazes and produced interesting white, yellow and brown mottled glass pieces which have become known as Rockingham ware.

Until the beginning of the eighteenth century white china was still unknown in Europe. Bone china was perfected and first marketed in quantity in England by the second Josiah Spode, about 1800. Dresden china, Royal Worcester, the blue and white Dutch delft, and the porcelains of France and Germany each had their own characteristics.

Gold for pottery decoration was difficult to apply to pieces of stone or earthenware, thus making it extremely rare during this period. After a succession of technical developments, a fluid combination of very finely powdered gold and a solvent with resin was the big factor in a complete revolution in the field of patterns and designs - especially relating to the development of white china. A slight touch of gold had been used to enrich multi-colored flowers, insects or landscapes. Gold decoration became more widely used and sometimes replaced the other colors and was applied alone. This evolution happened throughout European countries where the china industry was owned by royalty or honored by financial help by families of noble birth. Naturally, the use of gold decoration gained in importance, becoming an expression of the luxurious tastes and highest refinements for the aristocracy.

Very little china was made in America prior to 1840. Chinaware of Oriental and English origin was brought to America in the Colonial period and in the early years of the Republic by shiploads. The fame of Limoges china is really due to M. Charles Haviland who established works in 1840 to make porcelain for the American market.

At this time the china doll industry became a booming operation in Europe. Manufacturers sold ceramic parts including hand painted heads, arms, and legs to American dealers. These were used as fashion models and many housewives bought the ceramic parts to make their own dolls. They sewed sawdust stuffed bodies and clothing for them. Antique dealers and others recognized the value of an original hand painted china doll discovered in an attic trunk or bureau drawer.



**A COUSIN FROM PRESQUE ISLE, MAINE**

by the late \*HELEN E. ROUNDY

While visiting Grandfather's home in Portland, Maine when I was about sixteen (1910), Deed Mardy a cousin came to visit in Portland. She was from Presque Isle and this was her first visit to Grandfather's home.

She and I were to share the only spare bedroom and retiring the same time I watched her prepare for the night which amused me greatly. First, she took out her false teeth and put them in a glass of water, next she took the "rats" out of sparse hair, then off with her false bosom, made of yards of ruffled hamburg lace. I was asked to assist in unlacing the very high boots she wore (no wonder she had cramps in her legs when she first arrived on the scene) and when she took off her bustle, I thought I'd die laughing. Stripped she was thin and scrawny and the articles that gave her an almost perfect figure were strewn all about the bedroom. After greasing her wrinkled face and lotioning her thin hands, she donned her high necked and long sleeved nightgown then putting on her night cap Deed was ready for a much deserved slumber. Such an ordeal must be tiresome indeed.

She blew out the smelly kerosene light and before I knew it she sprang into bed when one of her boney feet suddenly came up and struck me on the nose. One of the toe nails cut a gash in my already bloody nose. It bled profusely, but finally stopped and I thought we were ready for sleep. The hour was late, but she began to talk again and I think she talked until nearly morning.

When it was time to get up I was too sleepy to awaken but she yanked me out of bed. I am glad she did because I wouldn't have missed her "make up" for anything in the world.

Her artificiality was amusing but she was very jolly. I loved her for that because we all like to laugh, don't we?

\*Helen Roundy, Born 1894 Died 1977

Editor's grandmother

The Sutton Historical Society is an organization that exists to promote research and learning in the history of the Town of Sutton, Massachusetts; to acquire, protect, and preserve property, historical documents, relics and objects; and promote celebration of patriotic and historic anniversaries.

We meet monthly for various programs of historical significance. The public is cordially invited to attend any of our programs.

All persons who love Sutton and who wish to see its historical character preserved are welcome to become members of our active and growing society.

To: The Sutton Historical Society  
Mr. Keneth Hoover, Treasurer  
Box 127  
Manchaug, Mass. 01526

I/We are interested in joining the Sutton Historical Society.  
[Check one of the below]  
Family membership at \$5 per yr \_\_\_  
Single membership at \$3 per yr \_\_\_  
Junior membership at \$1 per yr \_\_\_  
[under 18 years of age]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Please print] Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

Please make checks payable to the Sutton Historical Society

Sept. 1977

**BLACKSMITH SHOP RENOVATION —**

At a Director's meeting in June, President Donald King appointed a committee consisting of Society members William Holst, Ray Hutchinson and Malcolm Pearson. Active restoration was commenced at the Blacksmith Shop after recommendations by Chmm. Holst as to what sections of the Shop were in urgent need of repairs.

Richmond (Bud) Black was hired on to be anchor man in this challenging project. Manpower to supplement the overall effort to sustain progress was furnished by a retirement trio: Donald King, William Holst and Malcolm Pearson.

The three major areas in dire need of repairing were the sills, siding, and windows. The building measures 24' x 62' and the first task was to preserve sills that were still structurally sound timbers and replace others with 104' of new material. Many of the old piers consisted of piled up stones without mortar and narrow stone posts which had been rendered askew by frost heaves. Twenty-six new cement piers were cast in support of the good sills and new ones.

The boarding on the front, rear and south sides had to be replaced due to primarily rot near the ground and weathering beyond usage. Also, the original framing front and rear had to be reinforced before new boarding could be applied. Approximately 1600' of native pine and spruce boards were used in this part of the project. It is planned to allow the weather to age the new lumber to acquire a texture and patina. Batten boards will be nailed in place for further protection.

A new cement floor was poured in the engine room to replace one in very poor condition. One improvement of interest is the cement ramp with imbedded flag stones leading into the shop.

Grading and a general outside cleaning spruces up the area. Now remains the task of a full inventory of the Shop contents to maximize the potential that is possible in recreating the art of blacksmithing.

From  
SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Box 127  
Manchaug, Massachusetts 01526

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