

THE GADROON

Newsletter of the South Carolina Silver Society

Columbia, South Carolina

Winter, 2009

FEBRUARY DINNER MEETING

The Summit Club, Columbia, South Carolina
1301 Gervasi Street (Wilbur Smith Building)
Friday, February 6, 2009
Cocktails 6:30; Dinner 7:30

The theme of this meeting will be Gorham. Frank White will be giving us some history about the firm and its wares focusing on the pre-1930 period, and also talk about how the firm marketed itself to become the pre-eminent silver manufacturer in the U.S. Attendees are encouraged to bring examples of Gorham flatware and hollowware and also of firms that were overtaken by Gorham.

FALL MEETING

We were treated to a view of the wonderful silver collection of Maurice Thompson of Charleston, South Carolina. She has an amazing collection of English, American and rare examples of South Carolina silver. We very much appreciated her hospitality.

HISTORY OF SOUTH CAROLINA SILVER SOCIETY, INC.

The South Carolina Silver Society, Inc. was started in April 1996 by a small group in the midlands who discovered the fun and satisfaction of sharing information about silver and silversmithing. This small group patterned the organization in the protocol established by the New York Silver Society, Inc.

The South Carolina Silver Society, Inc. has established as its purpose the study and appreciation of fine and antiques silver. It is an eclectic group whose interests include the many facets of the silver industry from the worldwide market, ancient silver, fine American silver, fine imported, modern silver and our own South Carolina silversmiths, past and present.

An annual dinner meeting is held in February in Columbia. Smaller, less formal meetings are held in the fall and the spring for the purpose of specific topic lectures and gatherings to share information and resources.

Our mentor organization, The New York Silver Society, Inc. has in the past sponsored trips and tours. The first of these was to Wintertur in Wilmington, Delaware to view the Dallas Museum exhibit, "Silver in American, 1840-1940". They offered a tour to London in June of 1996 to explore the English Museums and the local silver markets. We would like to be able to offer some field trips of this nature in the future.

Collectors, dealers, museum staff, silversmiths, scholars, historians and others who just have a love of silver are all members at this time. A diverse group broadens our base of information and appreciation of the industry and art.

GORHAM HISTORY Explore the History of a Great American Tradition

Humble Beginnings

One of eight children, Jabez Gorham was born on February 18, 1792. A few years after his father's death, Jabez was apprenticed at age 14 to Nehemiah Dodge, one of the founders of the silverware and jewelry industry in 18th-century New England. After learning his craft for seven years, Jabez formed a partnership that failed within five years. The determined young man then formed his own business as "Jabez Gorham, Jeweler." Achieving enough success to hire a small staff, Jabez was the first to make "French filigree" jewelry and a special kind of gold chain known as the Gorham chain. But the business struggled until 1831 when Jabez and his craftsmen began making "coin silver spoons," which had become quite popular throughout the northeast.

From Father to Son

Jabez took on partners and the enterprise flourished. He sold his interest in the partnership and retired for a brief period. Then he repurchased the silver business from former partner Henry Webster, a talented silversmith. But, by now, Jabez was wealthy and he didn't want to devote much time to the business, so

he brought his son, John, into the Gorham company. However, John left the company after only a few months because of problems with the foreman. He worked at various jobs and then rejoined his father as a partner. After John convinced his father to borrow a considerable sum to expand the company facility, Jabez sold his entire interest in the company to his son. John managed to pay off the debt and make the company grow. In fact, over the next 15 years, John and his associates evolved from a small shop that mostly made silver spoons to one of the largest and most prominent silverworks in the world.

A Remarkable Legacy

Gorham dominated American silver from the late 19th century to the 20th century. But creating and crafting beautiful and functional silverware is only part of the story. So talented and skilled were Gorham's artisans that they were often commissioned to create one-of-a-kind masterpieces and other important designs.

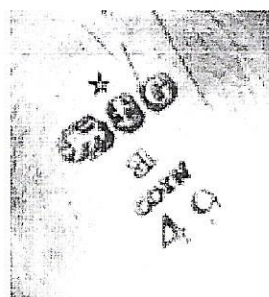
For example, Gorham crafted the famous monument of George Washington for our nation's Capitol Rotunda, as well as the famous statue of Theodore Roosevelt - the last American president elected by popular mandate - outside the Museum of Natural History in New York. The sculpture of the "Independent Man" commissioned for Rhode Island's famed domed state house serves as testimony to Gorham's artistic heritage. The Lincolns, Grants and, more recently, the Bush family chose Gorham for the elegant tableware that served so many friends and guests in the White House throughout their administrations. President Bush made Chantilly the official sterling flatware pattern of Air Force One. And Mrs. Grant chose Gorham to help commemorate the nation's Centennial in 1876.

In addition to crafting monuments and presentation pieces for foreign dignitaries and heads of state, Gorham was called upon to design elaborate trophies to honor major sporting events. These included the Borg-Warner Trophy for the Indianapolis 500, the Davis Cup for tennis and the America's Cup for yachting. Other noteworthy commissions received by Gorham ranged from Mrs. Abraham Lincoln's tea set to a grand "loving cup" composed of 70,000 dimes for Admiral George Dewey in 1899. The largest single commission Gorham ever received was the famous Furber service. Ordered by Colonel Henry Jewett Furber, the president of Universal Life Insurance Company of New York, the

740-piece service embodies the opulence of high Victorian dining. Perhaps no object better demonstrates the technical and artistic talents of Gorham craftsmen than the monumental silver and parcel-gilt "Neptune" epergne made for Furber and displayed at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876.

Throughout the years, other exhibitions of hand-hammered silver tables and ornate and imaginative hollowware pieces in silver and gold earned Gorham worldwide acclaim. Gorham won the Grand Prize Medal, Gold Medal and many other international awards.

Credit: www.gorham1831.com



Gorham 1848-1865



Gorham hallmark 1871



Gorham hallmark 1930



Gorham hallmark 1960



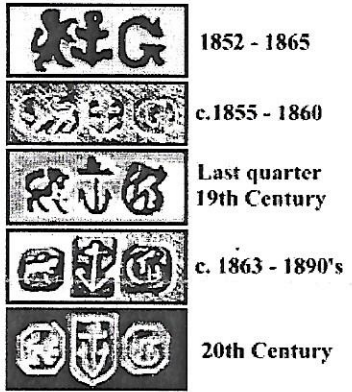
Gorham Martelé

GORHAM DATE CODE

• www . 925-1000 . dk • www . 925-1000 . dk • www . 925-1000 . cdknbsp; • www . 925-1000 . dk • www . 925-1000 . dk • www . 925-1000 . dk •

A	1868		1890		1912	Year marking was discontinued some time in 1933 and resumed again in 1941, on mid to high priced holloware. The geometric cartouche indicates the decade of manufacture, the numeral within indicates the year of the decade. (eg. □ 1940, ◡ 1953, ⬡ 1968)
B	1869		1891		1913	
C	1870		1892		1914	
D	1871		1893		1915	
E	1872		1894		1916	
F	1873		1895		1917	
G	1874		1896		1918	
H	1875		1897		1919	
I	1876		1898		1920	
J	1877		1899		1921	
K	1878		1900		1922	
L	1879		1901		1923	
M	1880		1902		1924	
N	1881		1903		1925	
O	1882		1904		1926	
P	1883		1905		1927	
Q	1884		1906		1928	
	1885		1907		1929	
	1886		1908		1930	
	1887		1909		1931	
	1888		1910		1932	
	1889		1911		1933	

- 1940's
- ◡ 1950's
- ⬡ 1960's
- 1970's
- ⬢ 1980's



(note) These Gorham date code marks are found on holloware and some smaller items, they were not used on flatware.

South Carolina Silver Society
 President: Frank White
 Vice-President: Bart Mullin
 Secretary-Treasurer: Robin Rice
 Board members: Kay Durham and Cecelian Whitten.
 Newsletter: Robin Rice