

# THE GADROON

Newsletter of the South Carolina Silver Society, Inc.

FALL 2019

## SCSS MET AT McKISSICK MUSEUM

Eight members of the South Carolina Silver Society met Saturday, August 24, at the University of South Carolina's McKissick Museum to view a new exhibit of several recently acquired pieces of 19<sup>th</sup> century silver made in South Carolina. Christian Cicimurri led the group through exhibits

19<sup>th</sup> century silver British silver collected by Mr. Baruch and his wife Annie Griffin Baruch.

## ANNUAL DINNER PLANNED FOR FEBRUARY 2020

The officers of South Carolina Silver Society have announced its annual meeting and dinner to be held Friday, February 7, 2020, in Columbia at the Palmetto Club. During the business meeting new officers will be elected and committee reports will be given. After dinner, Dr. Daniel Ackerman, Curator at the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts in Old Salem, will present a program on the role of punches (the drinking kind!) in Colonial America. Further details and registration forms are forthcoming.

## TOWN AND COUNTRY MAGAZINE FEATURES ARTICLE ON BUTLER

highlighting those pieces. As an extra treat, Ms. Cicimurri allowed the group into the storage vaults to see silver from the Bernard Baruch collection not normally on display to the public. The Baruch collection contains more than 500 pieces of 18<sup>th</sup> and

Town and Country magazine recently featured an article on Rick Fink, described by the magazine as "the last great butler." During his 66 years as a butler, Fink has served Queen Elizabeth, Prince Philip, and Princess Margaret, as well as members of the royal houses of Thailand and Kuwait. He now operates the Butler Valet School at Ditchley Park in Oxfordshire, England, once a royal hunting ground and later the retreat of Sir Winston Churchill, where he trains persons planning to go into a life of service.



Among his rules of butlering are:

...Fish forks and knives and soup spoons were invented by the middle class and should be avoided.

...No white gloves unless carrying silver. Fink says, "The gentry hate it when they see butlers wearing white gloves."

...Water stains on silver or fingerprints on glasses can be easily wiped away after holding the object over steaming water.

...Silver salvers can be used for presenting almost anything from the teacup to the newspaper to the mobile phone.

Tuition at Mr. Fink's school runs about \$6,300 for the two-week course.

## **SPENCER MARK WEBSITE FEATURES STORY ON WOMEN'S WORK AT GORHAM**

Spencer Marks, Ltd, the on-line silver retailer, in August posted an interesting article on women's work at Gorham silversmiths. Illustrated with photographs from the Providence Public Library, the article discusses how Gorham was among the early companies not only to employ women but also to take pride in their achievements going so far as to publish a book, *Women's Work at the Gorham Manufacturing Company*, in 1892. The article can be found at:

<https://www.spencermarks.com/blogs/journal/womens-work-at-gorham>.

## **LOOKING AHEAD ...**

...In addition to the upcoming annual meeting and dinner, the SCSS, in connection with Cricket Newman Designs, will present a program on taking care of silver. The program is planned for February 2020.

... The program committee has been working with The Mint Museum in Charlotte about a special time for member of the SCSS to see the exhibit on Gorham silver. The acclaimed exhibit featuring more than 600 of Gorham's finest pieces will be in Charlotte from July to November 2020.

## **Q & A**

**Q.** Where and when did silver begin to be produced in South Carolina?

**A.** According to Karen Swager writing in the *South Carolina Encyclopedia* (University of South Carolina Institute for Southern Studies, 2016), from the late seventeenth century through the early nineteenth century, the center of South Carolina silver production, importation, and consumption was Charleston. Populated with an oligarchy of planters and merchants, the city had the highest per capita income in British North America. British culture dominated Charleston society, and British goods, including silver, were in great demand. In a society known for its conspicuous consumption, owning silver was a practical way to both display and preserve one's wealth.

The early colonists imported all silver or plate from England, but by the early 1700s colonial silversmiths began to compete with imported British wares. A surviving chalice dated 1711 and attributed to the Charleston goldsmith Miles Brewton (1675–1745) indicates early silver production in the city. Charleston silversmiths, such as Alexander Petrie and Thomas You, as well as most American silversmiths, usually marked their wares with either their initials or their last names. Pseudohallmarks similar to British hallmarks were sometimes added to give the appearance of English wares.

## **SCSS MEMBERS ASKED TO SUBMIT IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS**

SCSS members are asked to continue to submit ideas for articles or other information that could be included in future issues of *The Gadroon* to Frank White at [frankwhite@bellsouth.net](mailto:frankwhite@bellsouth.net).

### **SOUTH CAROLINA SILVER SOCIETY, Inc.**

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