

THE GADROON

Newsletter of the South Carolina Silver Society, Inc.
SUMMER 2021

2020 MEMBERSHIPS CONTINUED

Last December, SCSS President Henry Brown announced to the members that owing to COVID-19 and the fact that the virus has prevented planned events and activities, all members in 2020 would have their memberships continued through 2021.

In a message to the membership, Henry wrote, “ 2020 will be remembered as the year we kept our distance and adjusted our traditions... As a result, membership to the South Carolina Silver Society is frozen for now and no dues will be collected for 2021. We look forward to a time of renewed fellowship that our members inspire in all of us.”

SCSS GROUP TOURS HISTORIC CHICORA PLANTATION

Friday, May 21, 2021, found approximately twenty members and guests of the SCSS gathered in Belton, South Carolina, to tour Dr. Tim Drake’s historic home, Chicora Plantation. In addition to seeing his collection of silver, many pieces of which had belonged to some of South Carolina’s most well-known families with names such as Calhoun, Bull, Pinckney, Landrum, and Clemson, as well as a massive tankard that had belonged to Russian tsar Peter the Great, the group was treated to touring a house filled with period antiques. Of particular note, in the kitchen were several pieces of Edgefield pottery made by the famed potter known as Dave, an enslaved African American who lived in Edgefield County from around 1800 to the 1870’s.

At a time when it was illegal to teach the enslaved to read and write, Dave was literate and often signed his work, and at times, would inscribe sayings and poetry on his wares. An example of his work, a large jar signed by Dave, is featured prominently in the Metropolitan Museum

of Art. So widely known is his work that it was the subject of a question on the television program, Jeopardy.



Chicora Plantation main house, circa 1826

Following the visit to Chicora, former SCSS president Dr. John LeHeup and his wife, Vickie, invited everyone to their lovely home where the dining room table was laden with delicious refreshments served from pieces of silver from the LeHeup's collection, many of which had South Carolina connections. One member noted that he was eating from a Charleston fork from the 1840's. As a special treat, Dr. LeHeup showed a number of rare "small" pieces that he has acquired over the years. Included were pieces from Gorham's rare patterns, Bird's Nest and Narragansett.

One of the distinct advantages of being a member of the SCSS is having the opportunity to see, and in many cases touch and examine, pieces of silver of the quality one could easily expect to find in museums.

The South Carolina Silver Society owes a huge debt of gratitude to Dr. Drake and the LeHeups for organizing and hosting what proved to be a fascinating and educational afternoon.



Narragansett serving spoon



Salt cellars and spoons in Gorham's Bird's Nest pattern

SCSS BOARD MEETS AGAIN

With the SCSS Board of Directors "fully vaccinated," the board met on April 14, 2021 for the first time since the COVID virus forced so many meetings and activities to be canceled. Recording secretary Jane Barnhill read minutes from the board's last meeting followed by a treasurer's report from Judy Anderson. What followed was a discussion of membership, funding, and future events.

RHODE ISLAND PBS FEATURES PROGRAMS ON THE HISTORY OF THE GORHAM MANUFACTURING COMPANY

Rhode Island's Public Broadcasting System has produced a documentary series of three one-hour programs on the history and work of the Gorham Silver Manufacturing Company. *Chasing Silver: The Story of Gorham*. first aired on PBS in May, can be accessed from the Internet.

Located in Providence, Rhode Island, Gorham Manufacturing began as the vision of one man, Jabez Gorham, only to rise to global heights to become the largest silver manufacturer in the world and one that, according to the documentary, "changed the world of silver forever." *Chasing Silver* is filled with stories of Gorham and the

craftsmen who worked there in addition to featuring countless examples of Gorham's most magnificent work.

The program can be accessed at

<https://www.pbs.org/video/meet-filmmakers-chasing-silver-story-gorham-75ydtg/?continuousplayautoplay=true>

UPCOMING SCSS ACTIVITIES

* This fall the SCSS will present a program on Columbia silversmith William Glaze who from 1838 to 1882 produced a significant amount of silver. Glaze not only made silver, but also made and sold jewelry, clocks, swords, and firearms. The weapons produced by Glaze at his Palmetto Armory constituted the majority South Carolina's small arms during the antebellum and Civil War period. William Glaze is buried in Columbia's Elmwood Cemetery. Board members are working with Elmwood to be able to hold the meeting there and to be able to visit Glaze's grave. Details will be forthcoming. For more information on Glaze, the South Carolina State Library has made available on the Internet a paper on Glaze and his work. The paper can be read at

<https://dc.statelibrary.sc.gov/handle/10827/9613>

* October 21-23, 2021 – Conference on The Decorative Arts of the Midlands. Sponsored by the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts. Described as an “unparalleled opportunity to get behind-the-scenes looks of local sites and exhibits” along with “special themed rambles” that will give participants “an up-close and personal look at rarely-viewed private collections and homes.” Details may be found at

<https://mesda.org/program/2020-conference/>

* If all goes well, the SCSS will hold its annual meeting and dinner at Columbia's Palmetto Club on Friday, February 11, 2022. Be sure to put the date on your calendar.

MAGAZINES FEATURE SILVER-RELATED ARTICLES

Several magazines, including *Garden & Gun* and *Columbia Metropolitan* have published articles with silver-related themes.

The article in *Garden & Gun* chronicles the story of cat burglar Blane Nordhal who for years stole silver valued at well over \$12 million all the while evading capture. Much of the silver he stole was rare, irreplaceable pieces from the Colonial era that would be lost forever. Among his victims was Ivanka Trump from whom he stole silver valued at more than \$150,000, the estate of the owner of Kentucky fried Chicken, and sportscaster Curt Gowdy. From New England to the Deep South, Nordhal targeted neighborhoods, including homes in Aiken, South Carolina, where one could find wealthy families with large collections of silver.

Of particular note was his stealing priceless silver from the Edgewater mansion in New York's Hudson River Valley. Owned by financier Richard Jenrette, who also owned Milford, the Hampton/Manning estate in Sumter County, the silver at Edgewater was assembled by Jenrette after thorough research and many trips to Europe.

The article can be read here:

<https://gardenandgun.com/feature/on-the-trail-of-a-silver-thief/>

Last year *Columbia Metropolitan* magazine featured an article, *Silver Lining: Bringing Columbia heirlooms back home*, by Dr. James Everett Kibler, Jr. In addition to information on Columbia silversmiths, Dr. Kibler advocates regular use of antique silver. His article also mentions the South Carolina Silver Society and cites former SCSS president Charlotte Crabtree.

The article can be found here:

<https://columbiametro.com/article/the-silver-lining/>

ICE CREAM FORKS SIGNAL THE START OF SUMMER

The beginning of summer seems a good time to enjoy cooling ice cream. This also can be a good time to bring out the ice cream forks and put them to good use. A product of the Victorian era when there was a separate piece of silver for almost everything, the ice cream fork combined a fork and spoon into one utensil perfect for eating ice cream, especially ice cream sundaes.

Not particularly easy to find, ice cream forks are collected by many people who find their myriad shapes and styles fascinating. A quick search of the Internet will turn up several articles on ice cream forks. Visit these sites for a few:

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/foods/ice-cream-fork>

<https://queenofsiennaskitchenjournal.wordpress.com/2016/03/19/doesnt-everyone-eat-ice-cream-with-a-fork/>

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 fewwhite.50@gmail.com.

SOUTH CAROLINA SILVER SOCIETY

Henry Brown, President

Judy Anderson, Immediate Past President

John LeHeup, Vice-President

Judy Anderson, Secretary/Treasurer

Jane Barnhill, Recording Secretary

James Brannock, Programs

Frank White, Newsletter

<http://southcarolinasilversociety.org>