

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES

by: Paul S. Butkus

An ongoing project at the MHS is the cataloging of the International Silver Company Archives. The collection includes numerous published catalogs and designs from the various companies which joined together to form or were later acquired by IS. The intent of the project is three fold. First; make known what is available within the Archive, Second; make the materials more easily available to researchers and Third; assess and better preserve the actual materials.

One of the hidden benefits of the project is the rediscovery of many unique or unusual items that were in regular production of custom commissions. While many of the mass produced pickle castors, flatware patterns and hollow ware items are frequently seen on websites or in personal collections, some items are rarely if ever seen. Whether custom made pieces or ones intended for a singular use, they were all lavished with the same attention to detail. The quantity, quality and diversity of the articles produced is simply amazing and there seems to be no end to the variations exhibited in the catalogs. Selecting just a few items to include here was difficult but hopefully these will give a taste of things to come.



Illustration 1: c. 1929 Custom Sterling (possibly gilt) Centerpiece made for the private Yacht NAKHODA owned by Mr. Fred Fisher (of General Motors -Body by Fisher fame). Custom designed gilt flatware service and hollow ware also made for the yacht along with silver plated serving trays.

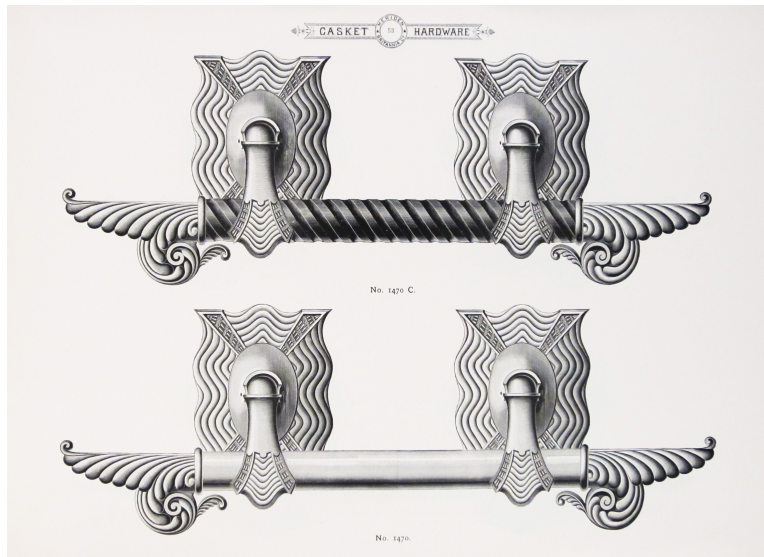
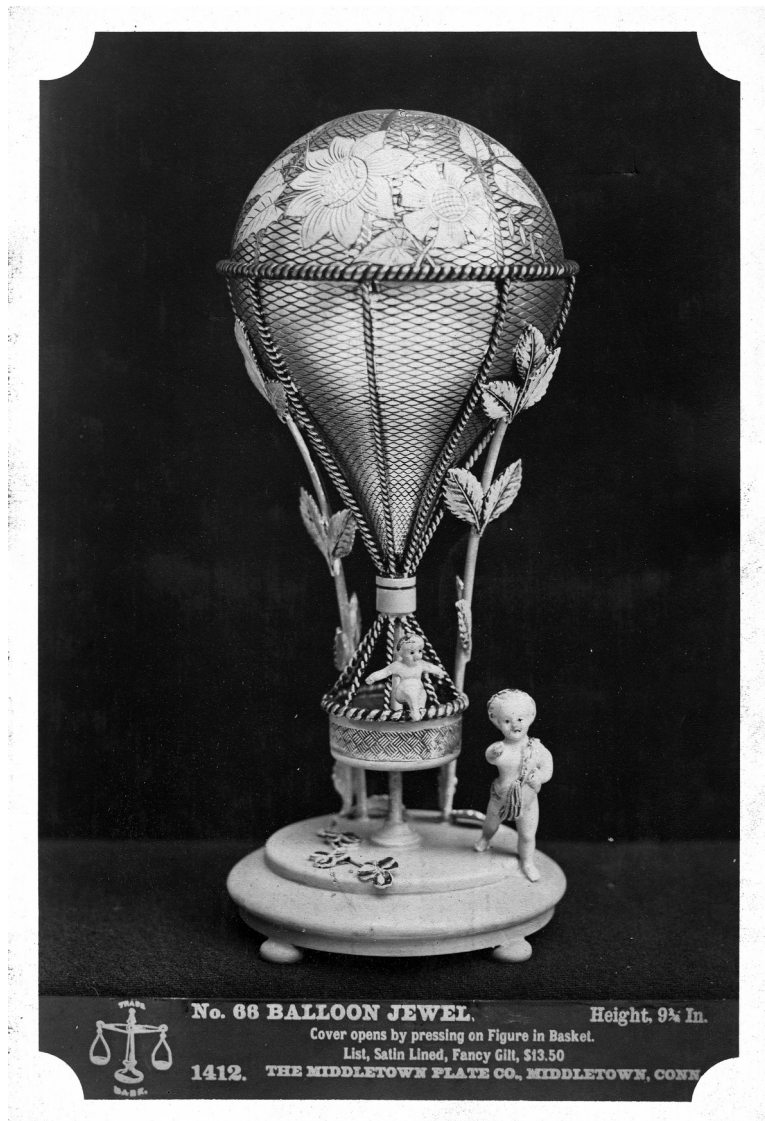


Illustration 2: 1890 Meriden Britannia Co. Casket Hardware



Illustration 3: 1879 Meriden Silver Plate Co. Card Receiver



No. 68 BALLOON JEWEL.

Height, 9½ In.

Cover opens by pressing on Figure in Basket.

List, Satin Lined, Fancy Gilt, \$13.50

1412. THE MIDDLETOWN PLATE CO., MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

Illustration 4: Middletown Plate Co. Jewel Casket in the form of a Balloon