

WINTERTHUR



# Winterthur Library News

Winter 2017

Greetings from Winterthur.

In this issue of *Winterthur Library News*, we have two guest contributors. Sarah Parks, head of the Boston Furniture Archive at Winterthur, writes about her work and how it relates to the library, and Dennis Carr, Carolyn and Peter Lynch Curator of American Decorative Arts and Sculpture, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, co-authors an article about Winterthur Library books in *Made in the Americas: The New World Discovers Asia*, Winterthur's principal 2016 exhibition.

We also make note of what some might consider a curious collection of printed ephemera, milk bottle caps; provide a description of a recently acquired manuscript indenture; report on a program involving the Salvation Army; and list another group of adopt opportunities.

With this issue, we wind up our seventh year of publication. We look forward to sharing news about the library for many more years to come.

The library staff and I send all best wishes.

Richard McKinstry  
Library Director and Andrew W. Mellon Senior Librarian



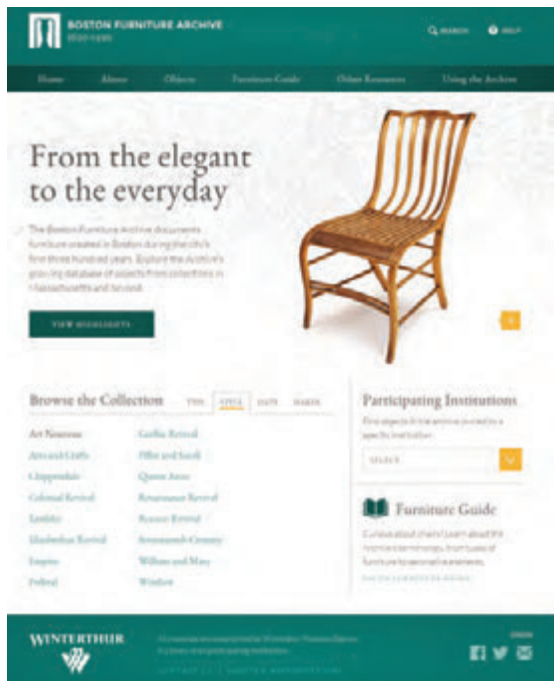
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# WINTERTHUR'S BOSTON FURNITURE ARCHIVE, 1630–1930

by Sarah B. Parks



Above: A Kenney Bros. & Wolkins school desk made about 1825–1939, now owned by the Brookline Historical Society and displayed at the Putterham School. Below: The Boston Furniture Archive's homepage.



Do the names John and Thomas Seymour ring a bell? How about Simon Willard? These craftsmen are among the most familiar names associated with the Boston furniture industry during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. However, they were far from alone. Over the past three years, Winterthur has contributed to our understanding of Boston furniture production—by named and anonymous craftsmen—through the development of the Boston Furniture Archive, a free, online database documenting furniture made in and around Boston, Massachusetts, between 1630 and 1930.

The Boston Furniture Archive grows out of Winterthur's participation in the *Four Centuries of Massachusetts Furniture* project, a two-year collaboration of eleven museums and cultural institutions to study and celebrate Massachusetts furniture through exhibitions, symposia, lectures, and publications. As an ongoing, web-based project, the Boston Furniture Archive builds on the energy of *Four Centuries* and provides dynamic content that can be revised to reflect new discoveries. The Archive is narrow in geographic focus; there must be a strong possibility the objects were made in Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Charlestown, Dorchester, or Roxbury, Massachusetts. However, the Archive casts a wide net in seeking to represent the full range of furniture produced in these communities. A late 19th-century factory-produced school chair is just as significant as a high-style tambour desk produced in the shop of John and Thomas Seymour.

Why is an archive of Boston furniture based at Winterthur rather than somewhere in Massachusetts? The answer lies in the forward-thinking work of the Winterthur Library in building the Decorative Arts Photographic Collection (DAPC), a repository of photographic prints and data sheets documenting decorative arts objects with known makers. The DAPC files, generated beginning in the 1950s, are especially strong in furniture, silver, and textiles from New England and the Mid-Atlantic. DAPC's files of Boston furniture serve as the starting point for building Archive records.

The DAPC files include objects being offered for sale. Print documentation of furniture on the market—either in advertisements placed in trade publications or in auction catalogs—may be the only surviving record of an object. The Archive is fortunate to have volunteers attempting to capture this information. Currently, the volunteers are surveying every issue of *The Magazine Antiques* to identify Boston-made furniture in advertisements and articles. These pieces are gradually being added to the Archive.

In addition to compiling information on objects already known through DAPC or print publication, the Archive seeks out newly identified or previously unpublished pieces held in small public and private collections. Each summer for the past three years, the Archive has organized a team of field catalogers to document and photograph objects at sites across eastern Massachusetts. The teams examine design and construction, identify woods, and record measurements

and condition notes. So far, ten graduate students and emerging museum professionals have documented 700 pieces of furniture at 22 locations in Boston and surrounding communities. While the information generated through this survey is important to the content of the Archive, the experience is also formative for the catalogers, leading to dissertation research and job placements.

Visitors to the Boston Furniture Archive's website find detailed object information and photographs that can be downloaded for further study. The virtual assembly of widely dispersed objects has begun to yield new connections. For example, a

*Winterthur's Boston Furniture Archive, 1630–1930 continued...*

chair in the collection of the Gore Place Society in Waltham, Massachusetts, may have come from the same workshop as a chair owned by The Trustees of Reservations and displayed at the Old Manse in Concord, Massachusetts. Without the Archive, it is unlikely that the possible relationship between these objects would have been recognized.

In addition to the database of objects, the Archive's website features the Furniture Guide, a tool that defines the terminology used to describe furniture and its parts. The website also provides links to other online resources for the study of furniture and Boston material culture. As the content of the Archive continues to grow, it will reflect an increasingly complete picture of the development of Boston's furniture industry. We hope that website users will be inspired by individual objects, curious to discover links among pieces, and eager to visit the institutions that own and interpret this furniture. Please explore the Archive at <http://bostonfurniture.winterthur.org> and send comments or suggestions to [bostonfurniture@winterthur.org](mailto:bostonfurniture@winterthur.org).

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## HARVEY PERKINS LEARNS A TRADE

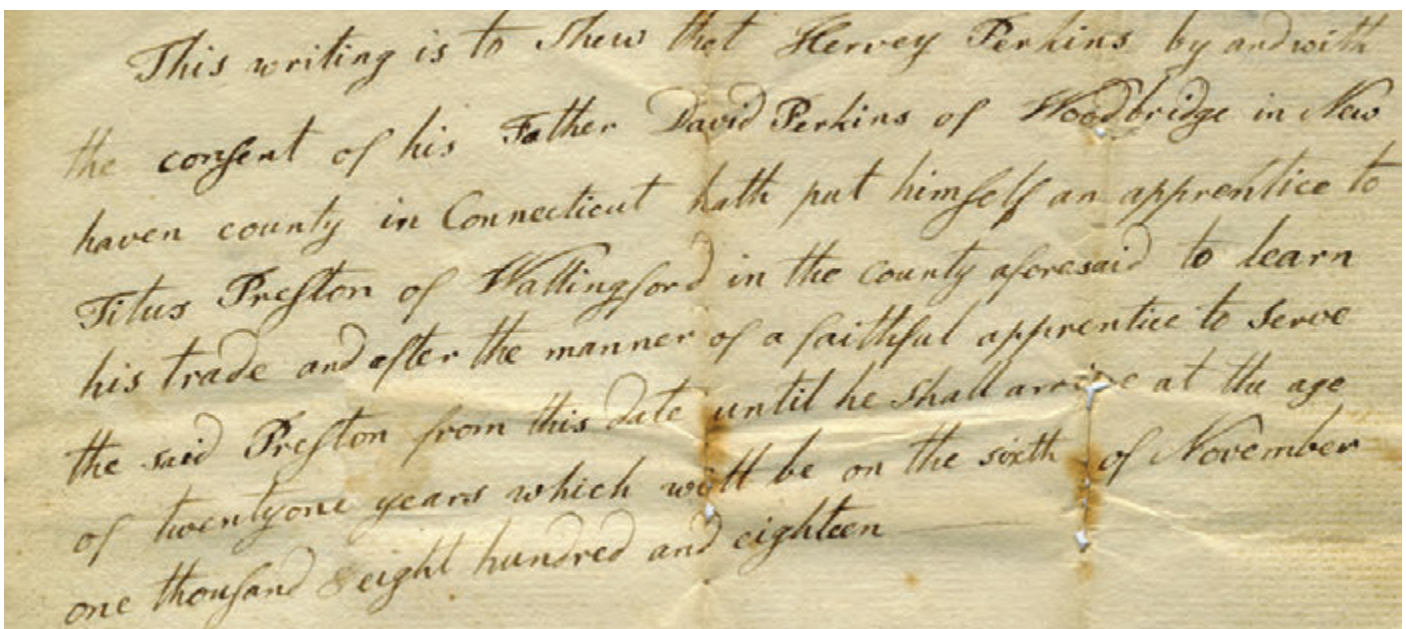
Things turn up in unexpected places. In October 2016, Winterthur was given a miniature chest of drawers for the museum's collection of furniture. Inside one of its drawers was the original handwritten apprentice contract of its maker.

On December 29, 1811, Harvey (spelled Hervey in the contract) Perkins (1797–1887) became an apprentice to Titus Preston of Woodbridge, New Haven County, Connecticut. As the contract reads: “And the said Titus Preston on his part doth agree to use his endeavor to learn his said apprentice the use of joiner or carpenter tools generally and to apply the use of them to some such branches of the business as said Preston may think proper...”

Preston also agreed to feed Harvey (“to provide his said apprentice with sufficient victualling”), lodge him, and give him opportunities to wash. Preston had to provide “plain decent cloathing for every day ware and for the Sabbath during the said term.” Additionally, Preston was obligated to educate Harvey: “One circumstance above alluded to is that of schooling which said Preston is to give him some opportunity for with a view to his obtaining learning in reading & to keep a mechanicks book of accounts.”

According to the contract, Harvey's apprenticeship would end when he became 21, “which will be on the sixth of November one thousand eight hundred and eighteen.”

As far as we know, the chest of drawers is the only known product of Harvey's furniture-making efforts, principally because he did not spend the rest of his life in cabinetry. He became a carpenter and in 1821 moved to Canaan, Wayne County, Pennsylvania, where he also taught school, was a contractor, farmed, and served as a justice of the peace.



This writing is to shew that Hervey Perkins by and with the consent of his Father David Perkins of Woodbridge in New haven county in Connecticut hath put himself an apprentice to Titus Preston of Wallingford in the county aforesaid to learn his trade and after the manner of a faithful apprentice to serve the said Preston from this date until he shall arrive at the age of twentyone years which will be on the sixth of November one thousand eight hundred and eighteen

Handwritten apprentice contract between Titus Preston, Woodbridge, New Haven County, Conn., and 'Hervey' Perkins.



## BOOKS IN *MADE IN THE AMERICAS: THE NEW WORLD DISCOVERS ASIA*

by Dennis Carr and Emily Guthrie

Nestled into and among the dazzling selection of colorful objects on display in the exhibition *Made in the Americas* are several books that are likely familiar to decorative arts and material culture enthusiasts. Selected by curator Dennis Carr, these books—specifically accounts of travel in Asia, chinoiserie pattern books, and design manuals—are renowned design sources for English and Continental decorative arts and architecture. Yet their inclusion in an exhibition on the influence of Asia on the decorative arts of the New World, especially New Spain, illustrates and expands our understanding of their range of influence.

Displayed within a case titled “China on Paper” are some of the earliest accounts of Asia—whether visual or written—to reach citizens of the Western world. Athanasius Kircher’s *China Monumentis* (“Record of China,” 1667) brought the experiences of a traveling Portuguese Jesuit, Álvaro de Semedo, to Western readers. Kircher’s works were read avidly by prominent Latin American intellectuals who observed similarities between pre-Hispanic and Asian art, and who increasingly sought links between ancient Asian and pre-Hispanic civilizations. The rich descriptions and exotic images in Johannes Nieuhof’s *Embassy of the East India Company* (1669) record his work in India and China as an agent of the Dutch trading company. The influence of these two books upon the English and European imagination forms the subject of much decorative arts scholarship. Senior Curator of Ceramics & Glass Leslie Grigsby has written about the use of Nieuhof’s imagery—Chinese flora and fauna, and figures dressed in Chinese garb—as decoration on English and Dutch ceramics. And illustrations from both Nieuhof and Kircher are known to have served as design sources for wall decorations at the Rosenborg Castle in Copenhagen. Yet the artists and patrons of New Spain were equally as hungry for new views of Asia that could be used to decorate their objects, and books such as these served to meet the demand.

Also on display is a remarkably complete copy of John Stalker and George Parker’s *A Treatise of Japaning and Varnishing* (1688). Stalker and Parker devised recipes for imitation Asian lacquers using traditional European materials. A suite of illustrations was intended to be copied or even cut from the book and applied directly to furniture, boxes, and other objects, in a technique called decoupage. Birds, insects, landscapes, and Asian figures—many of which were adapted from Nieuhof—decorate these pages. Although the earliest known copy of *Treatise* in colonial America was recorded in Philadelphia in 1783—some 50

years after the rage for japanned furniture in Anglo America was at its height—it is nonetheless plausible that this widely read treatise provided indirect inspiration for the many European-trained japanners who plied their trade throughout the American colonies, from Boston to Brazil.



The broad influence of Thomas Chippendale’s *Gentleman and Cabinetmaker’s Director* has been measured and re-measured in the annals of furniture scholarship. While undoubtedly influential in the English colonies, it also had a strong impact on New Spain. The result was a distinctively Mexican interpretation of Chippendale, characterized by forms that were heavier and more robust and elaborate than their English or Anglo-American counterparts. The third edition of the *Director*, published in 1762, is open to a pattern for an ornate “Chinese Bed,” one of numerous chinoiserie rococo forms found among its 200 illustrations. The European interpretations of Asian art and culture found in Chippendale and the earlier 17th-century European treatises on Asia had a profound influence on artists and patrons throughout the New World. Although places like Mexico enjoyed direct trade connections with Asia beginning in the 16th century, ironically they also looked to Europe for the most fashionable, aristocratic tastes, culminating in the so-called “chinoiserie” style that was widely popular by the end of the 17th century and reached its height in the 18th century.

*Made in the Americas: The New World Discovers Asia* will be on display in the Winterthur Galleries through January 8, 2017.

Top left: John Stalker and George Parker. *A Treatise of Japaning and Varnishing*... Oxford: Printed for, and sold by the authors, John Stalker ... or by George Parker, 1688. Bottom left: Athanasius Kircher. *China Monumentis*... Amstelodami: Apud Joannem Janssonium áa Waesberge & Elizeum Weyerstraet, 1667.



## MILK BOTTLE CAPS

Did you know that Winterthur Library has a collection of milk bottle caps? There are roughly 1,600 of them dating from the mid-20th century.

Years ago when dairies sold milk and milk-based products through direct deliveries to people's homes and in stores, they did so using glass bottles. The method of the bottle's closure to prevent milk from leaking out was initially challenging. Wired-on caps and swing stoppers were tried, but they were problematic. Eventually dairies used two caps. The outermost one was commonly foil or paper; it was frequently discarded when bottles were opened. The inner cap, usually of thin paper board with a tab so it could be pulled loose and then put back, was retained until the milk in the bottle was used. Then it was thrown away. But caps were not always castoffs.

As a child, Canadian David Lank collected milk bottle caps. In 1991, he reminisced about how he acquired them: "When I was a kid it cost 4 cents to send a letter. Each week I could spend 6 of my 25 cents allowance. Extra chores meant extra money for postage, and so I was able to write to scores of dairies across Canada and U.S.A., thanks to a list of addresses that I was given by the President of Continental Can. Time was of the essence, and so the message had to be brief yet powerful! As I remember it went something like this: Dear Sirs, I am 11 years old and collect milk bottle caps. Please send me some. This was probably [not] the great Canadian letter, but it worked and I received thousands."

According to Lank, 500 dairies across the United States issued milk bottle caps. To him, they were splendid examples of 20th-century advertising and design. As *The Encyclopedia of Ephemera* notes: "The milk-bottle disc became a minor promotional medium, used not only for the supplier's name and address but for slogans and commemorative motifs on great national occasions."

Some dairies devised a variety of graphic designs, while others simply used text. Caps frequently had days of the week on them to record when the milk had to be sold to prevent spoilage. As well, varieties of milk were recorded on caps—for example, raw, pasteurized, tuberculin tested, chocolate, mellow, homogenized, buttermilk, skim, kosher, and butterfat free. One dairy even boasted that its milk was army tested.

Illustrations on caps included: Shmoo, a cartoon figure created by humorist Al Capp in 1948; Abraham Lincoln and other United States presidents; and ships, animals, historical events, etc. Different fonts and typeface colors decorated the caps with advertising and other words such as "Keep it Cool" and "Kindly wash and return bottles daily," according to the ephemera encyclopedia.

Winterthur's milk bottle cap collection was donated by David Lank. Lank graduated from Princeton University in 1960. An investment counselor, he also worked for the DuPont Company, served as Deputy Head of Operations for Expo '67, was chairman of Montreal's McCord Museum of Canadian History, and was Director of the Dobson Centre for Entrepreneurial Studies of McGill University. Lank assembled a similar milk bottle cap collection from Canadian dairies and donated it to the McCord Museum.



*Milk bottle caps in Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera, Winterthur Library*



## SPECIAL COLLECTIONS MEET THE SALVATION ARMY

by Emily Guthrie

Some of the most colorful, weird, and just generally delightful items in the library are those that were designed with a juvenile audience in mind. Authors, artists, and designers indulged their sophomoric sensibilities in creating paper dolls, pop-up dollhouses, and coloring books for children from the 18th through the early 20th centuries. But due to delicate condition, and the typical age range of our patron community, emerging and seasoned scholars of college age or older tend to form today's audience for these materials.

An opportunity to introduce our children's collections to a new audience—children of the 21st century—recently presented itself. In recent years, Winterthur's School and Family Programs staff has provided history-inspired activities for twice-monthly visits to the Salvation Army after-school program in downtown Wilmington. Tasked with devising crafts that are both suitable and appealing to kids ranging in age from 4 to 11, each visit revolves around a theme. In response to recent conversations about connecting the Winterthur Library special collections to new and diverse audiences, coordinators Ellie Wallace and Lois Stoehr recruited me for an afternoon of library-themed activities.

Coming up with ideas was a cinch; making them interesting for a group that was as diverse in age as it was in motor abilities required a bit more creativity. Ultimately I came up with several activities, each designed to introduce the kids to an aspect of library life.

Can a four-year old make a book? Folded pages of printed scans from the McLoughlin Brothers' *The Sailor Boy* were given to the kids to be put in order. Next, the top and bottom corners of the spine were snipped at an angle and the packet of pages was bound together with string.

How was a child of the late 1800s enticed to learn the alphabet? For this exercise, block letters from Sheldon & Co.'s ca. 1860 *Fairy ABC* were adapted into an alphabet-themed coloring booklet. The pages could be completed with drawings of objects beginning with each letter.



And how have books been used to foster understanding of design principles and the development of fine motor skills? A collage activity was inspired by our collection of scrapbook houses and by the 1905 scrapbook-inspired children's book, *The House that Glue Built*. Using a printed illustration of an unfurnished living room from this book, and supplied with stacks of old *Magazine Antiques*, *Antiques and Fine Art*, and duplicate auction catalogs, the kids decorated their rooms by cutting out and pasting in art and furnishings. While the resulting collage rooms showed a range of interest in neatness and glue stick precision, none lacked visual excitement. The younger kids had some difficulty in using safety scissors to neatly trim around the scroll top pediments and ball-and-claw feet of an 18th-century highboy. And a few of the older kids bemoaned the absence of television sets and modern furnishings in the types of magazines we provided. Interestingly, the early 20th century collided with the digital technology of the 21st century in the work of two particularly crafty collage artists. They added human figures to their pages, gluing them and folding them in such a way that their arms and legs projected, like a 3-D movie, into the foreground.

While I think fun was had by all, I am certain that I left feeling exhilarated. I honestly wasn't sure that I could make an effective sales pitch to these digital natives—after all, my stuff doesn't talk back or move around upon command. There are no buttons to press. There's barely even any color. My concerns were assuaged by the enthusiasm I perceived and the questions they asked about books and libraries. I fully expect to see some of these young scholars in the Winterthur Library in the future!

Left: Resources from the Collection of Printed Books and Periodicals, Winterthur Library

## ADOPT A BOOK

We hope you will consider adopting from our current list. Donors will be recognized in our next newsletter. If you have any questions about the books, please contact Emily Guthrie ([eguthrie@winterthur.org](mailto:eguthrie@winterthur.org)). Donations should be sent to Winterthur Library, 5105 Kennett Pike, Winterthur, DE 19735. Please make checks payable to Winterthur Museum. Thank you very much.

We acknowledge with great thanks Catherine L. Westbrook, who adopted two of the books listed in our previous newsletter, *Other Things*, by Bill Brown and *Southern Spirits: Four Hundred Years of Drinking in the American South, with Recipes*, by Robert F. Moss. We also thank Elizabeth Owens for her donation, which will be used to fund the cost of several books. The library has now raised more than \$5,000 through its adopt program. Many thanks to all who have contributed.



**Lucinda Hawksley. *Bitten by Witch Fever: Wallpaper & Arsenic in the Nineteenth-Century Home*. Thames & Hudson, 2016. \$45.00**

In 1814, Wilhelm Sattler created a toxic arsenic and verdigris pigment, Schweinfurt green. It became a favorite among designers and manufacturers thanks to its versatility in creating enduring yellows, vivid greens, and brilliant blues. The arsenic-laced pigment made its way into intricately patterned, brightly colored wallpapers, and from there, as they became increasingly in vogue, into the Victorian home. *Bitten by Witch Fever* tells the fatal story of this home décor. Between the sections of text are facsimiles of the wallpapers themselves.

**Shin Maekawa, Vincent L Beltran, and Michael C. Henry. *Environmental Management for Collections: Alternative Conservation Strategies for Hot and Humid Climates*. Getty Conservation Institute, 2015. \$65.00**

This book offers hands-on guidance to challenges in conserving cultural heritage in hot and humid climates. The authors describe climate management strategies that offer effective and reliable alternatives to conventional air conditioning systems and that require minimal intervention into the historic fabric of buildings that house collections. Included are seven case studies of successful climate improvement projects undertaken by the Getty Conservation Institute in collaboration with cultural institutions around the world.

**Lia Markey. *Imagining the Americas in Medici Florence*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. \$79.95**

This volume argues that the Medici grand dukes of Florence were not only great patrons of artists but also early conservators of American culture. In collecting such New World objects as feather work, codices, turquoise, and live plants and animals, the Medici grand dukes undertook a “vicarious conquest” of the Americas. As a result, Renaissance Florence boasted one of the largest collections of objects from the New World, as well as representations of the Americas in a variety of media.

**Karoline Beltinger and Jilleen Nadolny, eds. *Painting in Tempera, c.1900*. Archetype Books, 2016. \$120.00**

The use of tempera paints in easel painting around 1900 has become a field of art technological research in its own right. Use of this heterogeneous paint type was not confined to one region, but was popular throughout Europe. The research reflected in this volume stems from the work of an international network of art technologists known as the Tempera group.

**Cassidy Percoco. *Regency Women’s Dress: Techniques and Patterns, 1800–1830*. Costume and Fashion Press, 2015. \$29.45**

The style of the Regency period is a source of fascination for fashion academics, historians, re-enactors, and stage and screen costume designers. This guide begins with a general history of the early 19th-century women’s dress followed by 26 patterns of gowns, spencers, chemises, and corsets, each with an illustration of the finished piece and description of its construction.

**Catherine E. Kelly. *Republic of Taste: Art, Politics, and Everyday Life in Early America*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. \$49.95**

Since the early decades of the 18th century, thinkers have been preoccupied with questions of taste. Whether they believed taste was innate or acquired, everyone appreciated that it was grounded in, demonstrated through, and confirmed by reading, writing, and looking. Former Winterthur research fellow Catherine E. Kelly demonstrates how American thinkers acknowledged the similarities between aesthetics and politics in order to wrestle with questions about power and authority.

**Rosey Grier. *Rosey Grier’s Needlepoint for Men*. Walker and Company, 1973. \$45.95**

A detailed how-to book on the craft of needlepoint by the famed 1970s football player Rosey Grier aimed at men. Includes many photos, step-by-step instructions, and sample patterns for the crafty man.

**John Harland.** *Seamanship in the Age of Sail: An Account of the Shiphandling of the Sailing Man-of-War, 1600–1860, Based on Contemporary Sources.* Naval Institute Press, 2016. \$52.23

Numerous reprints of works on rigging and seamanship indicate the level of interest in the art of handling square-rigged ships. John Harland has provided what is possibly the most thorough book on handling those ships. Because of his facility in a range of languages, he studied virtually every manual published over the past four centuries on the subject. As a result, he offers a thorough history of seamanship among the major navies of the world.

**Alison FitzGerald.** *Silver in Georgian Dublin: Making, Selling, Consuming.* Routledge, 2016. \$150.00

Georgian Dublin is synonymous with a period of unprecedented expansion in the market for luxury goods. This book considers the demand for silver goods in Georgian Ireland from the perspectives of makers, retailers, and consumers. It discusses the practical and symbolic uses of silverware interpreted through contemporary guild accounts, inventories, trade ephemera, and culinary manuscripts. Drawing on an extensive range of documentary and object evidence, this wide-ranging analysis considers the context in which silver goods were made, used, valued, and displayed in Georgian Ireland.



**Judith A. Tyner.** *Stitching the World: Embroidered Maps and Women's Geographical Education.* Routledge, 2015. \$107.00

From the late 18th century until about 1840, schoolgirls in Great Britain and the United States embroidered map samplers and silk globes, which were designed to teach needlework and geography. The focus of this book is not on stitches and techniques used in 'drafting' the maps, but rather why they were developed, how they diffused from the British Isles to the United States, and why they were made for such a brief time. This book provides a critical analysis of the samplers, showing that they offer insights into 18th- and 19th-century geographic thought, cartography, and female education.

## LIBRARY STAFF AND CONTACT INFORMATION

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