

SPEECH GIVEN AT SALVE REGINA COLLEGE MAY 17, 1964

TO ME THE JOY OF OWNERSHIP OF THIS COLLECTION  
OF EARLY AMERICAN SILVER IS TO SHARE IT WITH OTHERS,  
AND, I AM PARTICULARLY HAPPY THIS AFTERNOON TO EXHIBIT  
IT UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE SALVE REGINA COLLEGE ALUMNAE  
ASSOCIATION AND TO SHARE IT WITH YOU.

I WISH THIS EXHIBIT TO BE CONSIDERED AS A PART  
OF THE CULTURAL PROGRAM OF THE COLLEGE AND PLEASING IT  
IS TO ME THAT IT FOLLOW THE RECENT REMARKABLE SUCCESS OF  
THE REGINA PLAYERS OF THE COLLEGE IN THE PRESENTATION,  
UNDER THE SKILLFUL AND DEVOTED DIRECTION OF MISS JOAN DAVID,  
A MEMBER OF THE FACULTY, OF CLAUDEL'S DRAMA - THE TIDINGS  
BROUGHT TO MARY.  
THE EXHIBIT REPRESENTS, IN A LARGE MEASURE, THE

CULTURE OF OUR COLONIAL PERIOD. THE SILVERSMITHS WERE  
AMONG THE EARLY SETTLERS IN AMERICA. AND, THE APPRENTICE-  
SHIP SYSTEM AS FOLLOWED IN THE OLD WORLD WAS INSTALLED  
AND AS A RESULT THEIR NUMBERS INCREASED AS FORTUNES WERE  
MADE BY AMERICAN PLANTERS, MERCHANTS AND SEA CAPTAINS,  
WHO PREFERRED TO CONVERT THEIR SILVER COINS, ACQUIRED IN  
TRADE, INTO TANGIBLE ASSETS THAT WERE USEFUL AND READILY  
IDENTIFIABLE. THE FIRST APPLICATION OF THEIR SKILL, AND  
THEIR TALENT, WAS TO PROVIDE THE VESSELS REQUIRED BY THE  
SEVERAL RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS ESTABLISHED IN THE COLONIES  
UPON ARRIVAL FROM THE OLD WORLD. AFTER THE SEVERAL CHURCHES  
WERE SUPPLIED, OUR SILVERSMITHS DEVOTED THEIR TALENTS TO  
PROVIDE SILVER FOR UTILITARIAN USE AND THAT IS WHY YOU WILL

SEE IN THE COLLECTION SUCH ITEMS AS: CREAMERS, CUPS, PORRINGERS,  
TANKARDS, SPOONS AND THE OTHER ITEMS WHICH HAVE A HOUSEHOLD  
USE.

OUR EARLY SILVERSMITHS BROUGHT FROM THE OLD WORLD  
THE PRACTISES FOLLOWED BUT FROM THE OUTSET THEY CREATED A  
DISTINCTIVE DESIGN SO TODAY ALL OF THE SILVER OF OUR EARLY  
CRAFTSMEN IS DISTINCT AND DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF CRAFTSMEN  
OF THE OLD WORLD. DO NOTE THE REFINEMENT, THE SIMPLICITY,  
THE DELICACY, AND PURITY OF OUR EARLY SILVERSMITHS. THEY  
ABANDONED THE GUILD HALL TO WHICH THE SILVERSMITH WAS REQUIRED  
TO TAKE HIS PIECE AND PROVE THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE DESIGN  
AND OF THE METAL USED BEFORE THE GUILD HALL WOULD APPLY  
THE CRAFTSMAN'S HALL MARK. OUR EARLY SILVERSMITH PREFERRED

TO IMPRESS UPON THE PIECE OF SILVER HIS INITIALS OR HIS

NAME AND DESIGN HIS OWN MARK. HE WOULD NOT YIELD THAT

SUPERVISION WAS NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH THE AUTHENTICITY

OF THE DESIGN OR THE QUALITY OF THE METALS USED.

AND, FURTHER, MOST OF OUR SILVERSMITHS, IN FACT

A GREAT MAJORITY OF THEM, WERE PROMINENT IN THE GOVERNMENT

OF THE COLONIES. AND, THEY WERE VERY ACTIVE IN THE CAUSE

OF LIBERTY AND THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE AMERICAN

REVOLUTION. AND, FURTHER, ACTIVE IN THE REVOLUTION. UPON

THE CLOSE OF THE REVOLUTION, WITH DESPATCH, THEY AGAIN

COMMENCED THE APPLICATION OF THEIR SKILL. NEWPORT SILVERSMITHS

RANKED HIGH, AND THEY ARE REPRESENTED BY MANY PIECES IN THIS

EXHIBIT. THEY ARE: SAMUEL VERNON, JOHN CODDINGTON,

DANIEL RUSSELL AND ARNOLD COLLINS, WHO DESIGNED THE SEAL OF

OUR STATE, AND OTHERS. THERE ARE SOME PIECES WHICH I PARTICULARLY WISH TO CALL TO YOUR ATTENTION. THEY ARE THE PIECES OF JOHN CODDINGTON - CUP, MYER MYERS - SUGAL BOWL, JEREMIAH DUMMER - PATCH BOX, MOODY RUSSELL - SPOUT CUP, PETER VAN DYKE - COVERED PORRINGER AND DANIEL VAN VOORHIS - SPOONS.

THE COLLECTION OF AMERICAN SILVER LEADS ONE INTO MANY FIELDS OF INTEREST AND UNUSUAL PROFIT. ONE IS HISTORY IN GENERAL, ANOTHER IS HISTORY IN SOME OF ITS SUBDIVISIONS, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, ESTHETIC. BEST OF ALL, HOWEVER, IT LEADS TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF THE ETHOS OF AMERICA. THE ETHOS OF AMERICA IS THAT CHARACTERISTIC INHERENT IN ITS MENTALITY, IN ITS CUSTOMS AND IN ITS ENDEAVOR

WHICH MAY BE COMPREHENDED IN THE PHRASE THE AMERICAN WAY  
OF LIFE.

SO THOROUGHLY IS THE AMERICAN ETHOS EMBODIED IN  
THE WORKS OF AMERICAN SILVERSMITHS THAT IT HAS GIVEN TO  
THEIR PRODUCT A TYPICAL IDENTITY AND IT NEVER CAN BE  
MISTAKEN FOR THAT OF ANY OTHER COUNTRY. THOUGH THE CRAFTS-  
MEN OF OTHER NATIONS MAY HAVE INFLUENCED THE DESIGN AND  
WORKMANSHIP TRACES OF ENGLISH, FRENCH, SPANISH AND ITALIAN  
INFLUENCES MAY BE FOUND, BUT ALL OF THESE HAVE BEEN TRANSMITTED  
INTO AMERICAN FORTHRIGHTNESS AND SIMPLICITY.