



CRAFTSMANSHIP of early Newport silversmiths is evident in delicacy of handles of punch strainer (c. 1765) by Thomas Arnold (1739-1828). Strainer, 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ " in length, is in collection of Cornelius C. Moore, Newport lawyer.

—Staff Photos by Harry A. Scheer

Know Antiques

Early Silver and Newport

By PETER E. RIEDEL

If anyone is really eager to become acquainted with antique American silver, there is abundant material available, both in the silver itself and in documents relating to those who made it and those who used it.

If we study the art of our early American silversmiths, we will be informed that nearly all the Colonial output of silverware was produced in New England, New York and Pennsylvania and that many of the craftsmen were of Dutch, English, and French origin. It is perhaps natural that the Southern colonies where the strong Royalist plantation owners were living lacked interest in the development of native craftsmanship. Coming to this new country, they changed residence but clung tenaciously to the customs and traditions of the mother country, Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas imported their plate

"Pine Tree" shilling and a sixpence—minted on account of the scarcity of English currency and in defiance of the Crown—were the first coins made in America.

Among others who achieved prominence were Jeremiah Dummer, John Coney and Edward Winslow. The latter fashioned silver of such extremely fine quality that he might well take first place in the ranks of American silversmiths. Later came the famous patriot, Paul Revere, whose work is especially known for its beauty of design and for its superb craftsmanship. Although, as a result of Longfellow's poem, he has received actually more credit than was his due since the work of many other silversmiths was quite the equal of his.

Most of the early silver was made from coins, which were

melted and refined to the desired standard. An addition of copper was used to toughen it. Since the silversmiths of this country were not required by law to conform to a certain silver standard or to use date letters, as did England, the ware often carries the initials, name or symbol adopted by the maker.

If the question arises, of how to recognize early American silver—remember, the forms are simple, often even primitive, very characteristic of the tastes of our ancestors who made no attempt to imitate England's baronial silver. The pieces carry little or no decoration, except perhaps a molding, beveled edge, or beading.

Next week—South Kingstown is heard from. More of Mr. Moore's collection.



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During the Colonial days, Boston was a major commercial center of trade and culture. Having on hand considerable sums of money and no banking facilities, the colonists often decided to convert their surplus silver into articles suitable for domestic use. This practical custom gave to the local artisans a large volume of business, unheard of for that day and age.

Of Boston's silversmiths, the earliest with whose work we are familiar today are John Hull and his partner, Robert Sanderson. A number of finely modeled chalices and two-handled silver cups, also called "caudle-cups," by these men still belong to New England churches; and a few more are in museum or private collections. The energy and skill which they displayed as craftsmen brought Hull and Sanderson not only commercial success, but official posts. For 30 years these two coined silver for local circulation. Incidentally, the famed

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RARE CANN or two-handled cup by Jonathan Otis (1723-1795), Newport, was often birthday, marriage gift.



PRECIOUS PIECES: Matched cups held by Moore are only ones in existence. Made by John Coddington Newport, (1690-1743), they were bought in Engle