

PEWTER

Pewter was first made in Roman times as a metal alloy that was composed of tin to which a small amount of copper was added. Later, other hard metallic elements such as bismuth and antimony were added to pewter for durability and strength.

During the Renaissance, pewter was often used by the wealthy as tableware and by the clergy for religious objects. Imported from Europe to America in colonial times, pewter enjoyed great popularity in the New World and became the primary utilitarian ware in the colonies.

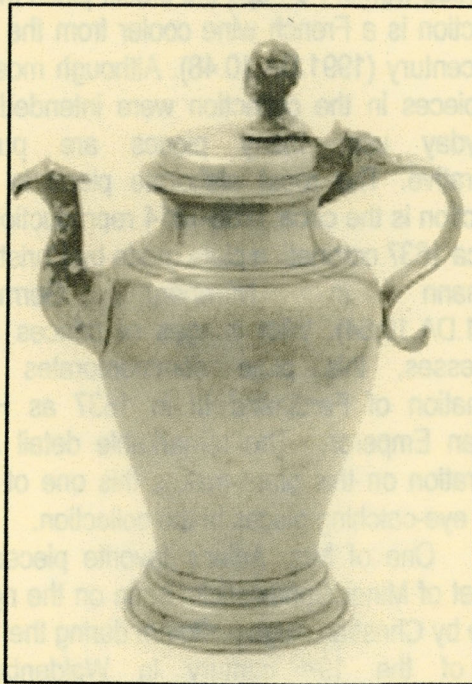
Pewter styles often mimicked styles found in other media, such as porcelain and silver, but many pewter pieces were in fact original creations. During the Art Nouveau period, pewter evolved from being a means of serving everyday food and drink into a medium for artistic expression. Many of the pieces in this pewter collection bear the marks of individual craftsmen and the cities or regions where they worked. Strict ordinances governed pewter guilds, not only to create a standard for pewter masters, but also to protect consumers from inferior products.

Pewter continues to be manufactured today, although its composition is different from pewter made in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries. The Adlers' collection at the Dixon is a reminder of the important role pewter played in the daily lives of everyday people for hundreds of years.

On the cover: O.H. Perron, *Pitcher*, French, ca. 1896, Collection of the Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Justin H. Adler, 1991.DA.10.45

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

If you have enjoyed viewing our collection today, we invite you to explore all the Dixon has to offer through membership. Join the Dixon today and receive free admission to the gallery and gardens for a calendar year. Call the Dixon Membership office for additional information at 901.761.5250.



David Andreas Mager, *Wine Dispenser*, Germany (Königsberg), ca. 1740-1760, Collection of the Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Justin H. Adler, 1991.DA.10.49

The Dixon Gallery and Gardens

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THE ADLER PEWTER COLLECTION



THE
DIXON
GALLERY AND GARDENS



Dr. Justin H. Adler and his wife, Herta have been pewter aficionados since childhood days in their native Germany. Both were reared surrounded by cherished pewter objects which had been handed down through their respective families for generations. When Dr. and Mrs. Adler left Germany at the approach of World War II, they were only able to take a few prized pewter pieces with them. These objects formed the bases of the Adler Collection which grew dramatically through the intervening years. Each piece in the Adler's nearly 400-piece collection on display at the Dixon was selected and purchased by the Adlers while traveling through Germany, England, France, China and other international cities.

In addition to the pewter, Dr. and Mrs. Adler collected other forms of fine and decorative art, selections of which have been displayed at the Dixon through the years. The Adlers donated their pewter collection to the Dixon in 1991. Sadly, Dr. Adler passed away in 1994, but Mrs. Adler, still an avid collector, continues, along with her family, to be a generous and beloved supporter of the Dixon.

Above: Dr. and Mrs. Justin H. Adler, pictured in 1991, holding the *Gustavus Adolphus Commemorative Vessel*, unidentified maker, Germany or Sweden, 17th century or later, Collection of the Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Justin H. Adler, 1991.DA.10.80.1

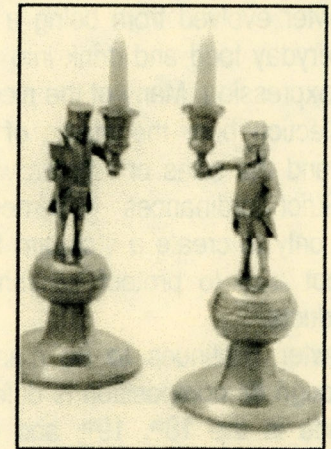
THE COLLECTION

The objects in the Adlers' extensive collection span four centuries, from the 17th through the early 20th centuries. All of the pieces in this collection remain in their original condition. The pieces are displayed according to use or style, such as drinking vessels, tableware, domestic ware, coffee and tea ware, decorative and ecclesiastical pewter, and Art Nouveau works. Perhaps the oldest piece in the collection is a French wine cooler from the late 17th century (1991.DA.10.48). Although most of the pieces in the collection were intended for everyday use, many pieces are purely decorative. The most elaborate piece in the collection is the circa 1786-1814 reproduction of a circa 1637 coronation plate made by Christoph Normann in Nürnberg, Germany (1991.DA.10.64). With images of princes and princesses, this plate commemorates the coronation of Ferdinand III in 1637 as Holy Roman Emperor. The remarkable detail and decoration on this plate makes this one of the most eye-catching pieces in the collection.

One of Mrs. Adler's favorite pieces is the set of Miner Candlesticks seen on the right, made by Christian August Klemm during the first half of the 19th century in Waldenburg, Germany. Since coal was such a vital resource in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, miners were held in the highest esteem. These candlesticks are some of the few pieces that the Adlers actually used in their home.

Stylistically different from all other pieces in the Adler Pewter Collection are the French and German Art Nouveau pewter objects, which provide an excellent

representation of the aestheticism that defined the movement. The pieces in this section display the organic shapes and floral motifs that typified the art of the period. One gem in this group is the pitcher featured on the front cover of this brochure. Produced by the French firm of O.H. Perron circa 1896, the pitcher glorifies the beauty of the female form. The mythical scene in a natural setting depicted is characteristic of the highly elegant Art Nouveau movement. The pitcher's intricate details and smooth, curving lines along with the sculpted handle are all a testament to how advanced pewter artists had become by the turn of the twentieth century. It becomes apparent while viewing this section that pewter pieces had become less about function and more about being aesthetically pleasing to the eye.



Christian August Klemm, *Miner Candlesticks*, Germany (Waldenburg) early to mid-19th century, Collection of the Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Justin H. Adler, 1991.DA.10.93.1-2