

Short Histories of Old Line Silver Companies

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The Apollo Silver Company

was based in New York, New York. In 1872, Apollo Silver Co merged with the bankrupt

Redfield & Rice forming the

Bernard Rice's Sons.

This took place prior to April 18, 1899 as the Patent Office records show the registraton of their tradmard to be used on plated silverware under the new company name. The company went out of business prior to 1958. The sterling dies are now owned by the Garden Silver Company.

The Benedict Manufacturing Company

was located in East Syracuse, New York. Organized in 1894 with M. Stewart Benedict as it's president. Incorporated in 1902, the Benedict Mfg Co reorganized in 1906 as

T.N. Benedict Mfg. Co.

Their principal business at the start was crafting silverplated holloware and they continued this line of goods which was adapted to household purposes and gradually included a line of holloware for hotel and restraurant use. Later they added a line of holloware plated on a nickel silver base, and a variety of equipment for soda fountains, including flatware. In 1910 they establised a branch factory in Canada. In another consolidation in 1912, they absorbed the

Hamilton Silver Manufacturing Company of New York,

the

Benedict Dunn Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut, and the

Benjamin Clark Silver Company, Ottawa, Illinois (founded in 1890).

Most of these factories were moved and merged with the East Syracuse plant. They continued to produce lines mentioned above until 1942 when much of their plant facilities were converted to war work. They went out of business in 1953.

Birmingham Silver Co.

of Brooklyn, NY, and later Yalesville, CT. The company was the successor to the

Goldfeder Silver Co.,

founded by Sol Goldfeder in 1932. The company became

Birmingham Silver Co.

sometime before 1957. The marks of the company include a "puffy" crown, B S C in gothic capitals, and "Silver on Copper". They made high quality silverplate, much of it in an English style.

The Colonial Silver Company of Portland, Maine

was the successor to the

Stevens Silver Company

in 1899.

They were known as manufacturers of plated silverware and pewter. Gold and silver and nickel plating was done to order. They were in business until 1943.

The Derby Silver Company

was a manufacturer of silver plate flatware and hollowware in Derby, Connecticut. They were one of the original companies that joined together to become the International Silver Company in 1898. They also used the name

Derby Silver Plate Company.

Empire Silver Plate Co. Brooklyn, New York.

Advertised in 1896 JW and JC&HR as manufacturers and importers of silverplated hollowares. Last record found in 1931.

Empire Art Metal Work, New York, New York Manufacuters of silverplated flatware 1930's - 1950's. Later controlled by Oneida Silversmiths.

Godinger Silver Art Co., LTD

moved to it's present location at 37 W 26th Street in New York from it's former location at 45 West 45th Street. Adjacent to the office and showroom is a new factory where most of Godinger's handcrafted silver holloware and pewter merchandise is manufactured.

The Hartford Silver Plate Company

was listed in Hartford City Directories from 1882 - 1894. Each listing accompanied by a half or full page advertisement. The 1882 listing says they were manufacturers of fine electroplated holloware.

Incorporaters: James

G. Batterson, E. N. Welch, Henry C. Robinson, W. H. Post, Jonathan Goodwin, James L. Howard and Rush P. Chapman. They advertised "Everything in silver plate." Obsorbed by

Barbour Silver Co.

in 1893, which became part of the International Silver Company in 1898. "

The Hartford Silver Plate Company engaged in refinishing and replating the beautiful candelabra of the White House, Washington, D.C."

The Homan Manufacturing Company

was established in 1847 in Cincinnati, Ohio. About 1864, the Homan Silver Plate Company gradually changed from the manufacture of pewter, britannia and German silver to electroplated silverware. They also did gold plating. Their regular products were ecclesiastical wares (chalices, patens, beakers, tankards, baptismal bowls, alms dishes and candlesticks). They also manufactured Ohio-Mississippi River Boat equipment (bowls, pewter plates, beakers, trenchers, charges, tea sets and swivel lamps. Bar equipment and items for domestic use (tea and coffee sets, cups, ewers and basins, warming pans, pitchers, jugs, sugar sifters, pewter combs, special frames, clockweights and buttons.). Around 1896, the name of the firm was the Homan Silver Plate Company which was succeeded by Homan Manufacturing Company between 1904 and 1915. They went out of business in 1941.

Jennings Brothers Manufacturing Company

(Jennings Bros. Mfg. Co.) were makers of silverplated toilet ware, crafting objects such as shaving stands, shaving sets, casseroles, table holloware, clocks, lamps and Sheffield reproductions. The Trademark "J.B." was used in 1891 on their silver plate novelties.

Set on the edge of the Berkshire Mountains of Western Massachusetts in the small town of Greenfield,

Lunt Silversmiths

was founded in 1882 by George C. Lunt and Anthony Towle with the goal of manufacturing the finest sterling tableware and giftware. In 1902 Mr. Lunt assumed full control of the company and it has remained in family hands since that time. Over the years Lunt has produced award-winning designs and built a reputation for unmatched workmanship and quality. Currently, Lunt manufactures over a thousand different items in the Greenfield facility, including the flatware pattern Embassy Scroll, chosen by the U.S. government as its official tableware in all U.S. embassies and consulates around the world. Family commitment and pride in quality work continue to drive the company now led by the fourth and fifth generations of the Lunt family. Along with our Greenfield plant, Lunt owns and operates another U.S. factory in western New York State making specialty scissors, and is the sole U.S. distributor of fine stainless steel tableware manufactured in France under the Couzon brand. Lunt has a century-old reputation of producing exquisite sterling holloware and giftware from desk accessories to complete

sterling silver tea sets. Lunt's emphasis on traditional design and functionality makes its sterling holloware items not only beautiful additions to today's homes, but also treasured heirlooms.

MERIDEN BRITANNIA CO.



MERIDEN CONN.

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MERIDEN BRITANNIA

Silverplated over Britannia base metal manufactured by the Meriden Britannia Company of Meriden, Conn. Horace & Dennis Wilcox of HC Wilcox & Company organized the Meriden B. Company in December 1852. Other founders were Isaac Lewis, James A Frary, Lemuel Curtis, and William Lyman.

Organized for quantity production, their first products and William Lyman. Organized for quantity production, their first products were Britannia hollowwares. By 1855 they were offering silver plated hollowware and flatware. Pearl handled wares were added about 1861. The company purchased the Rogers Bros. Mfg. Co; whose 1847 Rogers Bros. trademark was an important addition to Meriden Britannia Company. The officers of the corporation were among the leaders in the formation of International Silver Co. in 1898.

The Meriden Britannia Company was formed in 1852 in Meriden, Connecticut. The Rogers Bros firm was purchased by Meriden Britannia in 1862, thereby acquiring the 1847 Rogers Bros line. In 1878, they had a store at Union Square in New York City and a manufacturing facility in West Meriden, CT. According to their 1878 catalogue, the company won a first place medal at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for the "large variety of silver plated white metal hollow ware, of excellent quality and finish, and of tasteful designs." In 1896, the Meriden Britannia Company ceased stamping their products "Quadruple" plate. They were one of the original companies that joined together to form the International Silver Co. in 1898. The

The

New Amsterdam Silver Company

became part of the

Knickerbocker Silver Company

of New York. Knickerbocker Silver Co. was a successor to

James A. Babcock

in 1894 under William Tuscano as

Knickerbocker Manufacturing Company,
which became the Knickerbocker Silver Company before 1904.

Middletown Plate Co.

operated in Middletown, CT from its founding in 1864 until it was absorbed into International Silver in 1899. Then they moved to Meriden, the mega-center of electro-plate manufacturing in the world. In the early years (until 1876) they seem to have finished and sold hollow forms made by Reed & Barton. They also sold their goods to other plating companies who finished and marked them with their marks.

In 1880, a brittania (silver) works called the

Pairpoint Manufacturing Company

was erected on land adjacent to the Mount Washington Glass Company. The works were named after its first superintendent, Thomas J. Pairpoint. At the time, Mr. Pairpoint was considered one of the greatest

silver designers in England and America. This new company became one of the largest manufacturers of silverplated ware in the USA.

The Peerless Silver Company

was located in Brooklyn, New York. It was listed in 1936 Jobber's handbook as being manufacturers of silver plated wares, pewter salt and pepper sets and novelties. They were listed up until 1960, when they presumeably went out of business.

The Poole Silver Co.

was founded (35 miles South of Boston) on the Taunton River in Tauton Massachusetts in 1893 It was originally called

Poole & Roche.

Mr. Poole bought out his partner, Mr. Roche, and was sole owner until his death. His three sons took over the management of the company. In 1946, they retired and sold the company to an investment group headed by Sidney Kane of Providence, Rhode Island. The company has grown rapidly since. In 1946 a sterling silver department was added and in 1964 a brass division. The Bristol Silver division, which was founded in 1950, manufactured popular priced silver plated holloware. The Poole Silver Company was purchased by the Towle Manufacturing Company (Towle Mfg. Co.) and became a Division of Towle in 1971 . . Towle Mfg. Co. was acquired by Syratech holding company .

Richfield Plate Company

was a subsidiary of

Homan Manufacturing Company

in Cincinnati, Ohio. Established in 1847 as a britannia manufacturer. Mr. Asa F. Flagg was listed in the Cincinnati City Directories of 1842 - 1843 and again in the 1846 directory as the owner of Homan Manufacturing Company. Mr. Flagg was a potter and had gone to Cincinnati to form a partnership with Mr Henry Homan for the manufacture of pewter. Mr. Flagg was so devoted to his work that he was known locally as "Pewter" Flagg. Under the firm name of Homan & Co. they manufactured britannia ware until Flagg's retirement in 1854. Some pieces are also hallmarked as Flagg & Homan. M. Miller joined the firm and remained a co-partner until the death of Henry Homan in 1865. Mrs. Margaret Homan (widow) and their sons managed the firm until her retirement in 1887. Around 1864, the Homan

Manufacturing Company gradually changed their manufacturing focus from pewter, britannia and German silver to electroplated silverware. There are advertisements stating that Homan also did gold plating work. Their patent of 1896 indicated that their regular products were ecclesiastical wares such as challics, patens, beakers, tankards, baptismal bowls, alms dishes and candlesticks. They also were manufacturing items for the Ohio-Mississippi river boats like bowls, pewter plates, beakers, trenchers, charges, tea sets and swivel lamps. Domestic use items were listed as bar equipment, tea and coffee sets, cups, ewers, basins, warming pans, pitchers, jugs, sugar sifters, pewter combs, special frames, clockweights and buttons. About 1896 the name of the firm was the Homan Silver Plate Company which was succeeded by Homan Manufacturing Company between 1904 and 1915. They went out of business in 1941, just before the start of World War II.

The Rockford Silver Plate Company

operated from 1882-1925. founded in 1873 as the

Racine Silver Plate Company in Racine, Wisconsin.



< Racine mark 1873-1882

In 1882, the factory burned (with 1/2 the town) and the stockholders decided to rebuilt the plant in Rockford, Illinois, that same year(where they had a fire department).

Rockford made silverwares for the United States Jewelers Guild (also known as the Jewelers' Crown Guild). During this time, these silverplate wares were sold only thru select jewelry stores. Around 1925 the Rockford Silver Plate Company was purchased by Raymond Sheets and renamed the

Sheets-Rockford Silver Plate Company.

The flatware division was discontinued, but the silverplate holloware division continued. Later, the company began operating as a resilvering plant.

S.L. & G. H. Rogers

purchased the old inventory stock and the original records of the Rockford Silver Plate Company and the Sheet-Rockford Silver Plate Company were removed or destroyed. The company of Sheets-Rockford Silver Plate Company continued to appear in the City Directories until 1956.

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The F. B. Rogers Silver Company

was originally founded in 1883 in Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts and was moved to Taunton, MA in 1886. The company has used many different marks over the years and they are still in business today.

WM. A. Rogers, LTD

William A. Rogers was a small shopowner in New York and began to stamp the name "Rogers" on tinned spoons he sold when he found that they sold better with the name "Rogers" on them. He soon changed to German silver spoons, lightly silverplated. He was permitted to use Wm. A. Rogers on his goods if the pieces carried the same amount of silver as the well-known Rogers Bros. standard. They succeeded the

Niagra Silver Company

before 1904 and by 1918, they had taken over the business of

Simeon L. & Geo. H. Rogers Company

which had started in Hartford, Conn., in 1900. They were then succeeded by

Oneida Silversmiths

in 1929. According to Oneida records, Wm. A. Rogers, Ltd., was an Ontario corporation with offices in New York City and factories in Niagara Falls, NY and in North Hampton, MA. The company began making plated silverware in 1894. ,

Simpson, Hall, Miller and Company.

Samuel Simpson was well known for his Britannia ware in Wallingford. In 1866 he organized Simpson, Hall, Miller and Co., to do silverplating. He was extremely successful and in 1878 made a contract with William Rogers, Jr., to supervise the manufacture and marketing of Simpson, Hall, Miller and Co. Rogers "Eagle" Brand. In 1895 they started the manufacture of sterling silverware and were one of the original companies to become part of the International Silver Company in 1898. The Wallingford factory become International's sterling center.

The Roger Smith & Company

was formed in 1857 by William Rogers and George Smith to manufacture silverplate and britannia ware. The company was originally located in Hartford, but moved to New Haven when it was bought by Meriden Britannia Company in 1863. It was again moved to Meriden in 1876. The company was eventually absorbed by International Silver and by 1898, was simply a trademark used within the larger conglomerate. From the beginning, the company put out a huge range of goods, from elaborate tea sets to individual salt spoons and everything in between. One specialty, for which they held numerous design patents were ice water pitchers. While most goods were either britannia metal or silverplate, a limited amount of sterling was made. All sterling goods carried a special mark stating it was 925/1000 silver; if it does not, then it is either plate or britannia.

The Southington Cutlery Company

(location unknown) produced holloware from at least 1887 until 1892. Their circular mark had the words "Southington C. Co." and "Quadruple Plate".

James W. Tufts

was located in Boston, Massachusetts. His trademark was registered on February 2, 1875 for plated silverware in Medford, Massachusetts, and the company incorporated in 1881. He went out of business before 1915. From the silverplating of soda fountain apparatus used in drugstores, James W. Tufts branched out in 1875 to the manufacture of an extensive line of silverplated items such as pitchers, dishes and bases. The business was consolidated in 1891 to become the

American Soda Fountain Company.

Due to poor health, James W. Tufts turned the business over to others. He retired to 5,000 acres in the sandhills of North Carolina and founded the resort town of Pinehurst. He died there on February 2, 1902.

The Van Bergh Silver Plate Company

was founded in 1892 by Frederick W. Van Bergh and Maurice H. Van Bergh. A third brother was rumored to have joined the firm in 1898. The company was incorporated on July 1, 1904. In 1925, the Van Bergh Silver Plate Co. assets were transferred to a new corporation named the Van Bergh Silver Plate Company, Inc., which was set up by the Oneida Community, Limited. This new corporation was merged into Oneida Community, Limited in 1926 and moved from Rochester to Oneida, New York.

The Victor Silver Co.

is a trademark of the

Derby Silver Co.

The Derby Silver Company was originally called Birmingham. Founded in 1873, they were reknown silverplaters of holloware and made decorative wares of sterling silver. Their US Patent of June 26, 1888 registered their sterling trademark for use on forks, spoons, tea sets, brushes, mirrors and pitchers. Derby (Victor) was one of the original companies which formed the International Silver Co. in 1898. Over the years, they gradually dropped the flatware production and concentrated on silverplated holloware. The factory continued to operate in Birmingham (Derby) until July 1933 when it was consolidated with other plants in Meriden. Variations of the Victor Silver Co. logo were used after 1922 by International on silverplated flatware for hotels and restaurants.

The Roger Williams Silver Co.

purchased the dies of the

Howard Sterling Co

. in approximately 1901. In 1903 they merged with the

Mauser Mfg. Co. and the

Hayes & McFarland Co.

to form the

Mt. Vernon Silversmiths Co.

W.W. MFG. CO.

Little is currently known of this company. However, with as many small silversmith companies which were in existence on the Northeast Coast during that time, it most likely merged with another company in the late 1800's.

WALDORF SILVER COMPANY

was a trademark of Woodman-Cooke Company. Woodman-Cooke was located in Portland, Maine and began as

Stevens & Smart from 1879-1883 as manufacturers of britannia ware. They became Stevens, Smart & Dunham (1884-1886), then Stevens & Smart (1887-1890), Stevens, Woodman and Company from 1891-1892 and finally Woodman-Cooke Company from 1893-1914 when they were known as high-quality manufacturers of silverplated wares.

The R. Wallace & Sons Mfg. Co. was originally located in Wallingford, Connecticut. Today, the company goes under the name Wallace Silversmiths, Inc. They were manufacturers of sterling and silverplate flatware and hollowware. Today, Wallace is owned by

Syrtech Corporation of East Boston, Massachusetts.

Waltham Silver Company

was founded in Waltham, Massachusetts in the EARLY 1800's. Waltham Jewelers crafted silver pocket watches & jewelry for the "upper class", but for very special clients, they would craft silver hollow ware pieces.

The Watrous Mfg. Co.

located in Wallingford, Connecticut was started in 1896 and was one of the original companies that formed the International Silver Co. in 1898. Primarily a maker of silver plate that also made some items in sterling.

The Webster Company

was originally founded by George K. Webster in 1869 in North Attleboro, Massachusetts. Their line of sterling items included over 20 patterns of dresser sets, picture frames, cigarette holders, bowls, baby items, candlesticks, napkin rings and more. They were primarily manufacturers of sterling items, however they did have a small line of silver plate items. In 1958, they purchased the Frank W. Smith Silver Co. and today the Webster Co. is part of Reed & Barton Silversmiths.

Wilcox Silver Plate Company

, Meriden Connecticut

Founded in 1865, as the Wilcox Britannia Company in Meriden CT. The name was changed in 1867. It was later one of the founding companies of International Silver in 1898. The company plant was closed in 1941 due to the war metal shortage. After the war, its house designs were made by other International factories, but the company as a separate entity was not revived. In 1961, various divisions were consolidated and its name was changed to Webster-Wilcox.

Wilton Brass Foundry of Columbia, Pennsylvania.. They were manufacturers of articles that are "hand-cast in sand and hand-polished. The beauty and weight of pewter...(made of) a secret fusion of 10 metals..."

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What does "Quadruple plate" or "Quadruple Silver Plate" (silverplate) mean? Quadruple silverplate holloware was some of the highest quality made during the later part of the 19th century. Within the silversmith and silver manufacturing industry, items marked "Standard" silver plate indicated that 2 troy ounces of pure silver were used to silver electroplate 144 teaspoons, but "Quadruple" silverplate used 8 troy ounces of silver to plate the same 144 spoons. "Triple" silverplate items used three times as much pure silver as "Standard" and 1/4 less than "Quadruple" silverplate items. Silverplate holloware items which have been resilvered over the years may have more or less silver than originally plated. Quadruple silverplate items were four times as heavily plated with silver than items marked "Standard" silverplate.

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- [SILVER TERMS](#)

Sheffield Plate

The search for a silver substitute was prompted by the increasing prosperity of the 18thC middle classes and led to the invention of Sheffield Plate by Thomas Boulsover c.1743. The new material was made by fusing a sheet of sterling silver to an ingot of copper in a furnace. The resulting material was then rolled or hammered into a sheet and made up into both decorative and practical objects, using the power of the new technologies of the time.

The "double sandwich" form of Sheffield Plate was developed around 1770. Used for pieces such as bowls and mugs that had a visible interior, it consisted of a sheet of silver each side of a piece of copper; early manufacturers applied a film of solder over the bare edge of copper although such pieces are very rare. Later on, borders were applied with a U-shaped section of silver wire to conceal the copper which can be felt as a lip on the underside.

From the end of the 18thC the borders of Sheffield Plate pieces became increasingly ornamental,

more so than on [sterling](#) silver wares, probably because they could be produced far less expensively than solid silver borders. Borders should be carefully examined for wear. A little copper showing is generally considered attractive, but more than that is not. The decoration of Sheffield Plate is always [flat-chased](#), and the pattern should be visible on the underside of the piece. Engraving is not a feature of Sheffield Plate (except for coats of arms), as it would have meant cutting through to the copper base. In early pieces the copper showed through where coats of arms were engraved, but from the end of the 18thC a more heavily plated disc, which could take the engraving, was let into the piece. In the Regency period this method was superseded by letting in a pure silver oblong; this can be easily seen as the rest of the object has a surface of sterling standard (92.5%), it oxidizes at a different rate from the pure silver part.

Most pieces of Sheffield Plate hollow ware, such as candlesticks and coffeepots, have a visible seam. If no seam is visible, the article has either been re-plated and the seam covered up in the process, or it is not Sheffield Plate. Some articles have a liner - for example, urns. Once this is removed, a dull lead-ish colour, caused by tin, should be visible on the inside. A silver colour inside indicates re-plating.

Much of Sheffield Plate is unmarked although some makers used a symbol. Some early 19thC Sheffield Plate had marks that resembled those used on sterling silver. A piece with "Sheffield Plate" stamped on it is electroplate made in Sheffield since the 19thC, rather than genuine Sheffield Plate. The end of Sheffield Plate was signified by the discovery of electroplating in the 1840's. By the time of the Great Exhibition of 1851 almost no Sheffield Plate was exhibited, electroplate being the new fashion..

Electroplate

This method of plating silver was used from c.1840 and gradually replaced Sheffield Plate, which after the Great Exhibition of 1851 became increasingly rare. Electroplating creates a coating of pure silver which is whiter and harsher in appearance than the softer glow of Sheffield Plate. The process involves covering one metal with a thin layer of silver by electro-deposition. The laws of electrolytic deposition had been formulated by Faraday as early as 1833 and the process was patented by the Elkington company of Birmingham in the mid 19thC.

In 1836 G.R. Elkington applied for a number of patents for "an improved method of gilding copper, brass, and other metals or alloys of metals" by electrolysis and in 1840 he took out a patent for a new process of depositing silver by electrolysis, a discovery which he had made in collaboration with John Wright, following work he had carried out for the London maker Benjamin Smith.

The base metal was initially copper, subsequently nickel was used, hence the term EPNS (**E**lectro-**P**lated **N**ickel **S**ilver). Britannia Metal , an alloy of tin, copper, antimony and zinc is quite often found bearing the stamp EPBM.

Styles followed those that were most popular in silver. The most popular electroplated items are cake baskets, candlesticks and entree dishes. Tea sets are becoming increasingly popular. Being far less expensive even than Sheffield Plate, electroplated wares are not collected for their intrinsic worth but as inexpensive silver- style items. Electroplated flatware services provide the only alternative to silver, as it proved impossible to make flatware in Sheffield Plate without a large ugly seam. Flatware patterns tended to follow the styles of their Sterling counterparts.

Unlike Sheffield Plate, most electroplate has makers' marks and indications of quality such as "A1" "EP" or "EPNS" Some silversmiths made both electroplate and Sterling silver - for example, James Dixon & Sons, Elkington, and Walker & Hall. Although the marks used were similar on both their silver and their electroplates, the marks are applied in a noticeably different way.

BRITANNIA METAL

Britannia ware was first produced in England around 1780 and in America about 1824. As a cheap substitute for pewter, it contained no lead and could be easily molded and joined. Light in weight and brighter than ordinary pewter, it also became an acceptable substitute for silver. After the Civil War, however, much pewter had been melted down for bullets and Britannia was no longer fashionable
