

# A Beginning and a Board



*18th century wood panel as a glass pane replacement. From a building on Badger's Island, Kittery, Maine. Private collection.*

***The Warner House Glass in America Exhibition was planned to be on display for two years. This year was to be the first year, but due to circumstances beyond our control we've altered our plans. Over the summer season we will present an object each week electronically as well as to the public on our plank fence. With luck, next summer, we will present a traditional exhibition in cases and room settings.***

Bob Barth and committee members have teamed up to kick things off with the first object. Interestingly, it's not even glass. Chris Havey has an amazing assortment of fascinating architectural fragments which might comprise a worthwhile exhibit on their own. A small group of these objects we plan to display under "Yankee Frugality and Ingenuity" and this is one item we thought should qualify.

THE OBJECT: This week's object is a solution to a problem. It is an adzed and sawn 7" x 9" x  $\frac{3}{8}$ " piece of wood with nicely chamfered edges, which was salvaged from an 18th century building on Badger's Island, Kittery, Maine. It is not a piece of glass rather it served as a replacement for a broken pane of glass. The fragility of glass has always been a problem and over the coming weeks along with intact examples of glass we plan to show you a solution or two to glass repair and replacement. We hope such objects, beyond the expected, might add further interest to the Exhibition.

## Shattered but not Lost

THE OBJECT: It's hard to imagine in this day and age a shattered mug being consigned to anything but the trash (or recycle) heap—nor, for that matter, even a hundred years ago. What then was the difference in consideration of such an object two hundred years ago? A sense of Yankee frugality in the extreme? Surely such a mundane object did not retain a level of monetary value to warrant such an extreme saving measure. Does it even hold water? And yet we know, even in the Warner House, where one would assume consignment to the Piscataqua River would be a foregone ending for such an item, similar measures were taken to rescue broken ceramics. The Warner House collection contains both a c.1760-80 Chinese Export Porcelain polychrome mug, whose multiple fragments are held together by metallic staples, and an excavated porcelain fragment retaining a staple—perhaps part of a pot that was broken, repaired, broken, and finally given up for good. In the 18th century there were advertisements for such repairs, so presumably there was a profitable demand.

Today's example, whatever the mind-set which brought it here, is an interesting curiosity. This mug of free-blown colorless glass, is probably c. 1790-1830. It is of uncertain origin, as similar mugs were made in England, the Continent and America at the time. The applied handle appears to have kept those fragments confined to the mid-body from separating. This design element allowed for the tight placement of soldered tinplate straps as a repair. Perhaps simply the challenge of accomplishing such a repair was its own reward.



*Glass Mug c. 1790-1830 with metal strap repair. Private collection.*

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