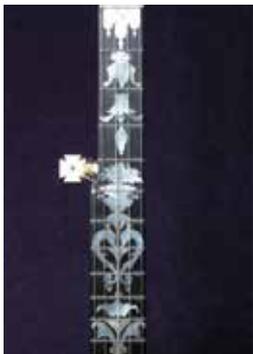




Reflections Of Our Past

The Jim Bollman Collection

Special Exhibit
American Banjo Museum
June 2019-May 2020



Fairbanks Whyte-Laydie Deluxe, C.1902, # 20588.

One of two known examples (neither of which has its original rim). It was Fairbanks' fanciest model (circa 1901-1902) and was decorated by Icilio Consalvi who is thought to be the best banjo inlay and engraving artist of all time. He was active in the banjo trade from the early 1890s till around 1906. Fairbanks listed the banjo in their catalog at \$275, a princely sum in the early years of the 20th century.



S.S.Stewart Presentation Champion, #15438, circa

late 1890s, one of three known with this fanciest SSS inlay pattern, the other two formerly in the Tsumura collection (one marked Champion and one Orchestra model). All three are almost identical with minor variations in carving, etc. One of Tsumura's examples was presented to a Philadelphia area college banjo club (probably Haverford College) after winning a competition staged for five area colleges in the 1890s.



Unknown Maker Tool Inlaid Folk Art Banjo C. 1870.

Tool inlaid 1870s presentation banjo- unfortunately the maker of this fabulous banjo is unknown. It's one of the best if not the best 1870s banjo extant with its Brazilian rosewood swelled hollow neck decorated with ivory, wood marquetry and mother of pearl " tool " shapes on the fingerboard. It was found at an antique tool meet in New Hampshire in 1990.

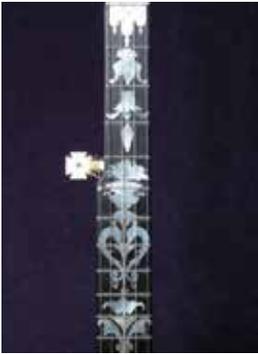


Stratton Presentation Model C. 1890s.

This is another banjo inlaid by Icilio Consalvi, whose superb work is readily identifiable to banjo experts. William E. Stratton owned a music store in Lowell, MA along with Joseph Handley around 1900. They sold banjos under their name but were actually produced by both the W.A. Cole and J.C. Haynes companies. This high grade custom banjo was built by Haynes, decorated by Consalvi and may have been built for Stratton's personal use.



Unknown Maker Philadelphia Centennial Exposition Banjo - 1876. Minstrel banjo - another tour-de-force period banjo purportedly exhibited at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. It's provenance goes back to the very early 1900s, always in Philadelphia until acquired in 1988. The unusual "sound chamber", chip carved decoration on the closed back and "string-tree" on the peghead are but a few of the custom features of this wonderful (unfortunately unsigned) banjo.



Haynes Bay State Model 366 C. 1890s. The fanciest known example of this maker. In 1970 an elderly gentleman named Vale Faro brought the banjo to a New Hampshire music store to inquire if they'd like to buy it. The banjo was a present from his parents when he graduated from elementary school at age 10. His parents took him to the Haynes showroom in Boston and said they wanted to buy the best banjo the company could provide for their son. They were told that the model #366 was the fanciest banjo that they ever made and that it had won a gold medal at the Columbian Exposition.



Unknown Maker Tackhead Minstrel Banjo C. 1840s
This is probably the earliest banjo in the collection, tackhead banjos predate the use of straining hooks and nuts to tighten the head although cheap versions were in trade catalogs well into the 1890s. Most experts consider this the best known example of an ante-bellum tackhead banjo. Its small size and light weight may indicate it was made for a child or a woman.



Fairbanks Custom Piccolo Banjo C. 1896. The double spun rim (metal inside and out) is an unusual feature for Fairbanks banjos. The custom inlay pattern is also unusual. A full sized Electric model with similar inlays descended through various Fairbanks family members until I was able to purchase it along with the family's Double Gryphon Electric several years ago. Piccolo banjos were invented by S.S.Stewart to be used in banjo orchestras, they were tuned an octave higher than a standard banjo.



Lyon & Healy Presentation Model C. 1890s. This is the fanciest known L & H banjo, the floral heel carving is unique as well. Like my Stewart the L & H has garnet mounted gold caps on its carved ivory pegs. The banjo has no serial number but dates from the late 1890s.



Henry Stichter Minstrel Banjo 1848. Stichter was in his teens when he built this banjo in Pottsville, PA. His family was involved in the hardware business which survived in various eastern Pennsylvania cities at least into the 1970s. He signed the head with the notation that he replaced the skin head a few years later, changes in seasonal humidity makes head breakage all too common. This is one of the most iconic minstrel era banjos with its unusual peghead shape, outrigger fifth peg and very large size (14" rim).



Fairbanks "Double Gryphon" Presentation C. Mid-1890s. There are eight known so-called "double gryphon" Fairbanks banjos (named for the twin inlays of a mythical beast in the peghead).



Fairbanks Custom "Electric" Banjorine C.1890s. Banjorines were invented by S.S. Stewart around the 1880s. This is the fanciest known period banjorine from any maker with its lion and eagle peghead inlay, full presentation fingerboard and the crane with snake in its beak inlay on the fingerboard extension. Banjorines had short scales and were meant to be tuned a fifth higher than standard for use in the banjo orchestras of the day. Most early banjorines (pre-1900) had oversize rims like this example but manufacturers scaled down their rims to normal sizes after 1900 for better tonal results.



Photo - Dartmouth College Glee Club, ca. 1900 - typical college glee and banjo club, most prep schools and colleges (both men's and women's schools) had fretted instrument clubs in the latter part of the 19th into the early 20th century.



Photo - Springfield BMG Club. Gatchell was the director, he is pictured with one of his custom Whyte-Laydie No.7 banjos bearing his initials inlaid into the fingerboard, early 1900s.



Photo- The Berkeley Trio - ca. 1890s, Stewart Special Thoroughbred banjo pictured, DeLano was a famous banjo player in his day, invented and marketed some banjo related accessories.



Washburn cardboard sign, ca. 1890s, this image was also used in some of their magazine ads.



Joel Walker Sweeney sheet music cover, D'Almaine London publisher, ca. 1840s, one of a few extant copies known.



Ruby Glass Banjo Mug - ca. 1900, ruby glass items were typically sold in souvenir shops often with the local towns printed on the objects. This is the only known example with a banjo.



Seated Clown Wind-up Toy. Guntermann (Germany), ca. 1900. Many minstrel toys were manufactured in Germany for domestic use but mostly for export. The plethora of minstrel themed toys in the latter part of the 19th century illustrates the popularity of the minstrel show across Europe and America.



Fairbanks & Cole embossed cardboard sign, ca. late 1880s, early 1890s, produced by the same firm that made the embossed Bay State sign. Only known example. Fairbanks continued using the Fairbanks & Cole name for a few years following the actual split of Fairbanks and William Cole around 1890.



Lady with Dobson Banjo. Charcoal drawing of lady with 1867 patent Dobson banjo- the artwork is probably contemporary to the banjo, unknown artist.



West African Ngoni. Date unknown but probably 100-150 years old, a west African semi-spiked lute, one of the modern banjo's ancestors.



Crank operated toy cabin scene with banjo player and dancers. Produced by A.A. Buck, a toymaker in Connecticut, 1870s/1880s, the crank produces the plink-plunk sound of the banjo using wire strings and moves the figures. This is a rare toy especially, original condition, most examples have replaced banjos.



Georgia Minstrels poster, 1870s, the group was the first minstrel group composed of African-Americans rather than Caucasians in blackface.



Bay State cardboard embossed store advertising sign (part of a set of three including guitar and mandolin), ca. 1890s, only known example.



Chain gang photo - ca. 1910-1920. Although a "staged" photo the musicians were probably actual convicts.



Washburn porcelain double sided dealer sign, one of three known, meant to hang outside a music store. Circa 1890s.



Gatcomb poster, 1890s, only known example. Illustrates their top model #100 banjo which sold for \$100 and featured a Brazilian rosewood neck and lion carved heel (my example is one of two known model 100 banjos extant).



Miniature Banjo By Edwin Cubley. One of four known, perhaps a salesman sample or simply the product of a very talented artisan, probably an employee in Cubley's factory in Ravenswood, Ill. in the 1890s.



S.S. Stewart Tin Sign, 1890s, only known example.



Foxy Grandpa Wind-up Toy, early 1900s. Foxy Grandpa was a popular cartoon character in that era. Made by Gunterman.



Banjo Shaving Mug. At the turn of the century (1900) it was common for men to be shaved at the local barber shop, they often kept their own particular mugs at the shop, often listing their names and occupations or hobbies.



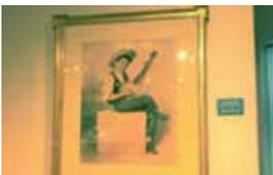
Banjo Patent Model by George Teed. Patent model with original tag (misspelled Tweed). Teed's patent was the second earliest banjo patent granted (1862).



Bust of African-American Banjo Player. Spelter (pot metal) statuette signed by Calvi, European manufacture, circa 1890s. This image was produced in a variety of materials and sizes including a life-sized bust in both spelter and terracotta.



Animated Sand Toy. Late 19th century, ingenious toy activated by a reservoir of sand much like an hourglass. Often produced as a cottage industry item and then marketed by several American firms in period.



Boy with Banjo. Watercolor of boy on crate, ca. latter part of 19th century, artist signature is unintelligible.



Bay State paper sign, ca. 1890s, illustrates their model 5 mandolin (their top of the line), only known example of this rare advertising sign.



The Banjo Player - mounted print - these French prints were taken from William Sydney Mount's famous painting of "The Banjo Player" which was commissioned for the sole purpose of selling the prints, mid-19th century.

*The American Banjo Museum
wants to thank
Jim Bollman and Ann Hough
for making this exhibit possible.
Items on display are just
a sampling of the Bollman's
lifetime collection of
banjos and banjo memorabilia.*



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