

## AN INTERESTING PIECE OF CAST PEWTER - LIKELY PRE 1800

Offered in this auction is a BEAUTIFUL ANTIQUE (1700's to 1800's?) PEWTER BALUSTER MARKED TANKARD MUG CUP \*RARE\*. (Said the eBay auction advert in October 2008. and went on to say - )

*Verification marks on American pewter are rare because American made measures are rare with the exception of the 19th century measures made by the Boardmans of Hartford, CT. American verification marks, however, can be found on English export baluster measures. These marks are simply letters, indicating the state, commonwealth, or county in which they were inspected, verified and used. These letters most often were stamped on the lids of baluster measures or on the upper rim of the body. Examples are: "A" (for Amsterdam) in New York state, "CM" for Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and "CP" for Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Unlike in England where verification marks can be found on pub or tavern mugs, such marks are extremely rare on American mugs. This HIGHLY DESIREABLE mug is marked "A" on the top outer rim and "CF" on the handle top. It's possible the "CF" are the owner's initials, but that's only theory. If one of you collectors out there can ID and date this piece, please let me know. Measures approximately 3 1/4" tall by 2" diameter at the base. It exhibits normal use wear with no major dents, bends, cracks, or repairs.*

*Sold for US \$527.91 October 2008*





So what is this?

It is a Gill unlidged American Baluster Measure – likely for wine.

A knowledgeable collector says -

The "A" mark is an American verification mark. Nobody seems quite sure what it represents but I have heard suggested both Amsterdam and Albany. I think that the latter is more likely as usage of New Amsterdam fell away in the C17th as the British pushed the Dutch out of NY - maybe Albany had an official verification function or was where the official Standards were kept.. The broken bar on the "A" is supposed to be the earlier mark (as opposed to the straight bar on the "A" on later pieces (which also tend to be less heavy). Again it has been suggested that as America (at that time) was completely reliant on English tin for the manufacture of pewter, post War of Independence measures tend to be much lighter in weight than early examples due to the lack of tin. Apparently, there are collectors in USA who have discovered more information, but as is often the case in the pewter collecting world, prefer to keep the knowledge to themselves.

The CP will represent a locality i.e. Commonwealth or County of "P". P could be Pennsylvania or Philadelphia or anywhere else in existence at that time which starts with a "P" - I will need to do a bit of research !

A particular interest for me in this measure was in the (broken) A stamped to the rim.

I have a half gallon unlidged with the same mark which is illustrated below and any reader with further information as to mark, where made, front initials, might like to share it with me by emailing to [johnstephenbank@btinternet.com](mailto:johnstephenbank@btinternet.com)

First thoughts suggested to me by an American collector some time ago was that it was the Masonic sign of dividers. Indeed a Masonic Senior (no I am not a member) said that the clubs used to pass jugs/measures like this around at the end of meetings with such a mark.



