



100 YEARS OF
American
Weathervanes

OLDE
HOPE

AMERICAN FOLK &
DECORATIVE ARTS
OF DISTINCTION

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Soon after the arrival of European settlers on the shores of North America, weathervanes began to appear in the rural landscape and urban skyline. Though intended to serve the function of indicating wind direction and the corresponding change in approaching weather, the seemingly endless variety of forms created for this purpose attest to the fact that these objects were meant to do much more than simply point into the wind. The purpose of the building on which they perched, or the trade of the occupant therein, or simply an aesthetic preference to display to your neighbors quickly became as important, if not more so, than the practical one.

The catalogues of 19th century weathervane makers offered an astounding selection to the prospective customer. Though these 'manufactured' vanes might not be considered folk art in the truest sense, they were produced by the skilled craftsmanship of individuals who often applied details that would never be visible to the observer hundreds or thousands of feet away. The Angel Gabriel, pictured on page 33 for example, wears a sash that ties on her back, raised between the wings, which could only be seen from above.

In recognition of the dedicated research by Bob Shaw and his brilliant publication, [American Weathervanes The Art of the Winds](#), and the exhibition of the same name at the American Folk Art Museum.

Then there are the many creations of individual blacksmiths, coppersmiths, or farmers who wanted a weathervane and set out to apply their own skills and imagination to achieve it. In many cases the result might not be as convincing a likeness as the corresponding form pictured in a catalogue, but a true piece of American folk art emerges.

The final ingredient, that elevates all early vanes to an aesthetic level not witnessed when created, is time. There is an almost indescribable beauty that results from a hundred years or more of sun, wind, rain, hail, salty breezes, and smokestacks playing on the gilded copper or painted surface of a piece of sculpture that has survived, often against seemingly unbelievable odds. These early weathervanes are a truly remarkable achievement in the artistic and sculptural tradition of America.

DETAIL



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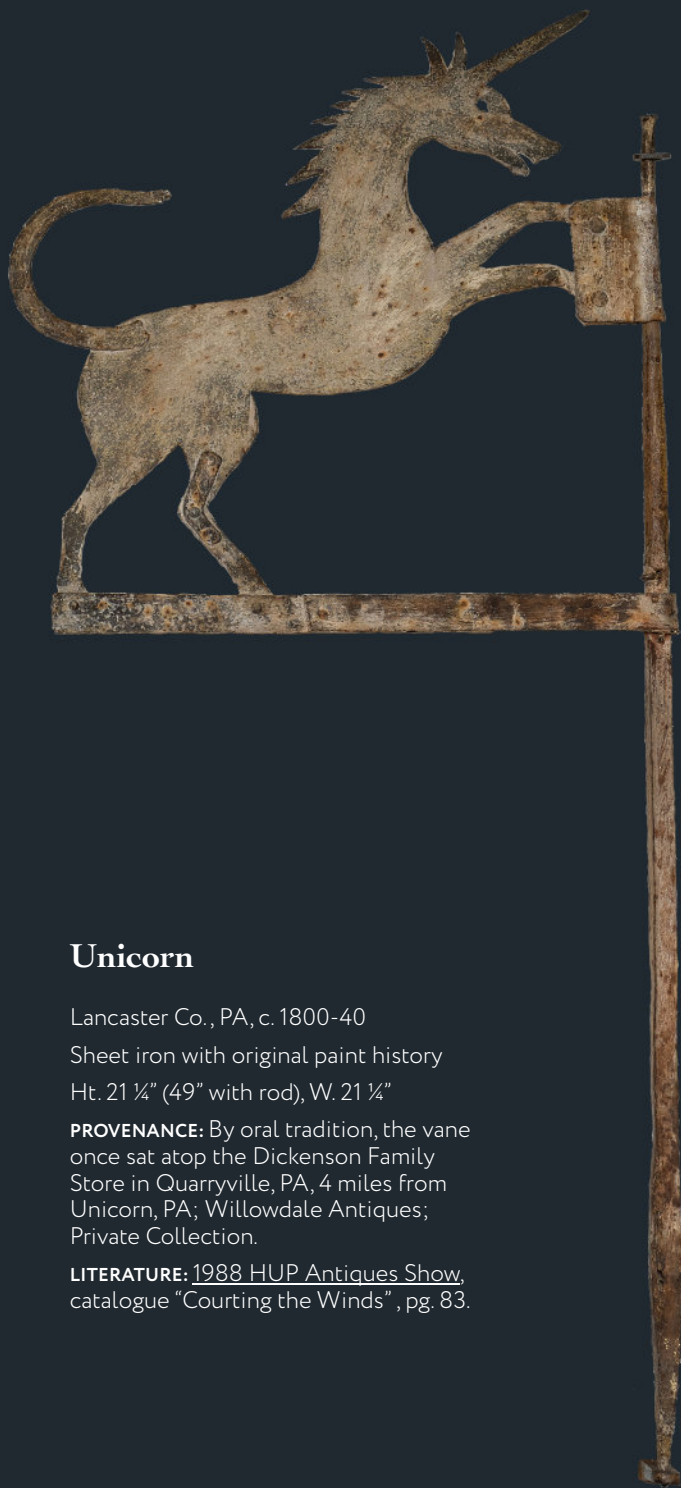
AMERICAN FOLK &
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Christian Giannelli @giannelliphoto

BROCHURE DESIGN: BadCat.com



Unicorn

Lancaster Co., PA, c. 1800-40

Sheet iron with original paint history

Ht. 21 ¼" (49" with rod), W. 21 ¼"

PROVENANCE: By oral tradition, the vane once sat atop the Dickenson Family Store in Quarryville, PA, 4 miles from Unicorn, PA; Willowdale Antiques; Private Collection.

LITERATURE: 1988 HUP Antiques Show, catalogue "Courting the Winds", pg. 83.



Dexter with Jockey

Attributed to J. W. Fiske,
New York City, c. 1875

Molded copper and zinc
retaining a fine verdigris surface
with heavy remnants of the
original gold leaf

Ht. 17 ¾", L. 32"



Rooster

American, c. 1870

Molded and sheet copper with
a verdigris surface and traces
of gilding

Ht. 23 ½", W. 23"



Rooster

New England, c. 1880

Cast and sheet iron with an early yellow painted finish and retaining the original iron ball

Overall Ht. on stand 43", W. 33 ½"

PROVENANCE: Ben Mildwoff Collection, Sotheby's, 1992; Olde Hope Antiques, Inc.; Meryl and Jay Weiss; Private Collection.

LITERATURE: Margonelli, "An Old-Fashioned Christmas," *Country Living* (December 1993), p. 83 (illus.); Shaw, *American Weather vanes The Art of the Winds*, pg. 213.





Fireman's Hat and Trumpet

Attributed to J.W. Fiske, New York City
c. 1890

Molded copper with a fine verdigris
patina with traces of original gilding
Ht. 30", L. 33"

PROVENANCE: From the HYC Hose No. 2,
Unadilla, NY.

Henry Y. Canfield, Unadilla, NY, who built
the firehouse in 1890; to the town of
Unadilla; the Lord family, 1949; Private
Collection, 2004.

LITERATURE: Shaw, American
Weathervanes The Art of the Winds,
pg. 186.





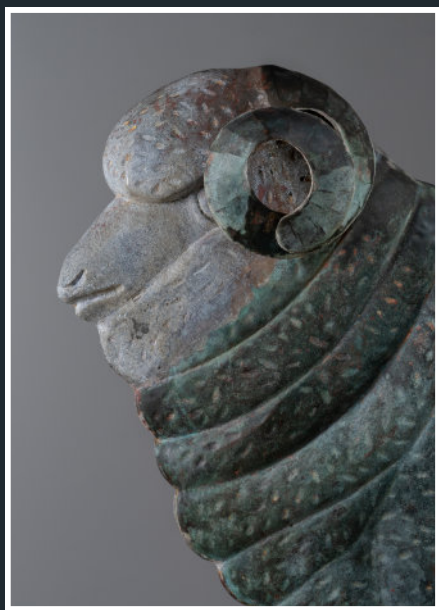
Ram

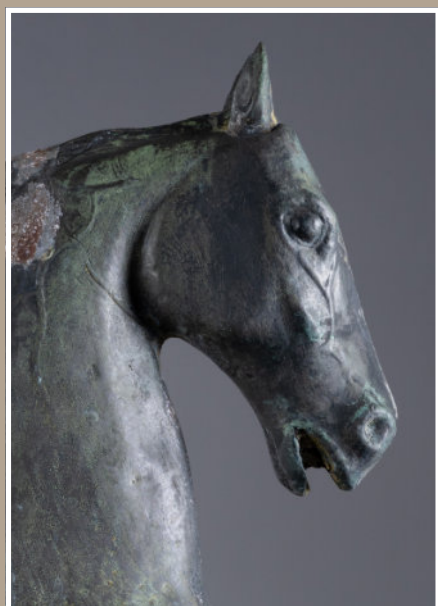
Attributed to Cushing & White,
Waltham, MA, c. 1875

Molded copper and cast zinc with
traces of later paint

Ht. 21 ½", W. 27", D. 7"

PROVENANCE: Giampietro;
Private Collection.





Blackhawk

Cushing & White or L. W. Cushing & Sons,
Waltham, MA, c. 1870 -1880

Molded copper

Ht. 24 ½", W. 35 ½"

From the pattern carved by Henry "Harry"
Leach, c. 1871-72, now in the collection of
the Smithsonian American Art Museum.



Fireman

Alexandria, Virginia, c. 1850

Wrought and sheet iron retaining the original painted surface

Ht. 52 ½", W. 35"

PROVENANCE: Friendship Engine House, Alexandria, Virginia; Harden de V. Pratt, Rhode Island and Virginia, 1930; George Considine, Massachusetts; Sotheby's, New York, Important American Folk Art from The Collection of the late Bernard M. Barenholtz, January 27, 1990, sale 5969, lot 1507; America Hurrah, New York;

Private Collection, New York; Olde Hope Antiques Inc., New Hope, Pennsylvania; Private Collection.

LITERATURE: Jean Lipman, American Folk Art in Wood, Metal and Stone (1948), fig. 49;

Robert Bishop, American Folk Sculpture (1974), pg. 266, fig. 495;

Maine Antique Digest: The Americana Chronicles. 30 Years of Stories, Sales, Personalities, and Scandals, ed. Lita Solis-Cohen, (2004), pg. 211-5.





Banner with Lyre and Star

New England, c. 1820-1850

Sheet copper and zinc retaining an early crusty, gilded surface

Ht. 27", W. 59"

LITERATURE: See Kaye, [Yankee Weathervanes](#), p. 75, for an illustration of an identical example atop the Union Congregational Church in Maynard, MA.

According to Myrna Kaye's book, [Yankee Weathervanes](#), she refers to this form as scroll vanes found on churches throughout New England. Designed with classical motifs, they were simple to construct and affordable to purchase.



Black Hawk with Sulky and Driver

Possibly J.W. Fiske, New York, c. 1880

Molded copper and iron wire with
a weathered verdigris patina

Ht. 16 ½", W. 37 ½"





Horse and Rider

Massachusetts, c. 1850

Molded copper with verdigris surface
and sheet iron

Ht. 27 ½", W. 28 ¼"

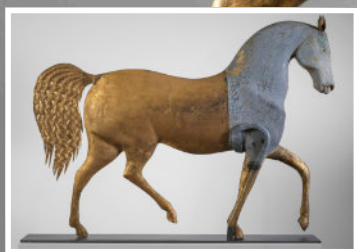
PROVENANCE: Hill Gallery, Birmingham, MI;
Private Collection.

'Index' Horse

J. Howard & Co., West
Bridgewater, MA, c. 1856-67

Molded and sheet copper and
cast zinc retaining an early,
perhaps original, gilded surface
Ht. 18 ¼", W. 25"

PROVENANCE: Florence Knoll.



Locomotive and Tender

American, c. 1890

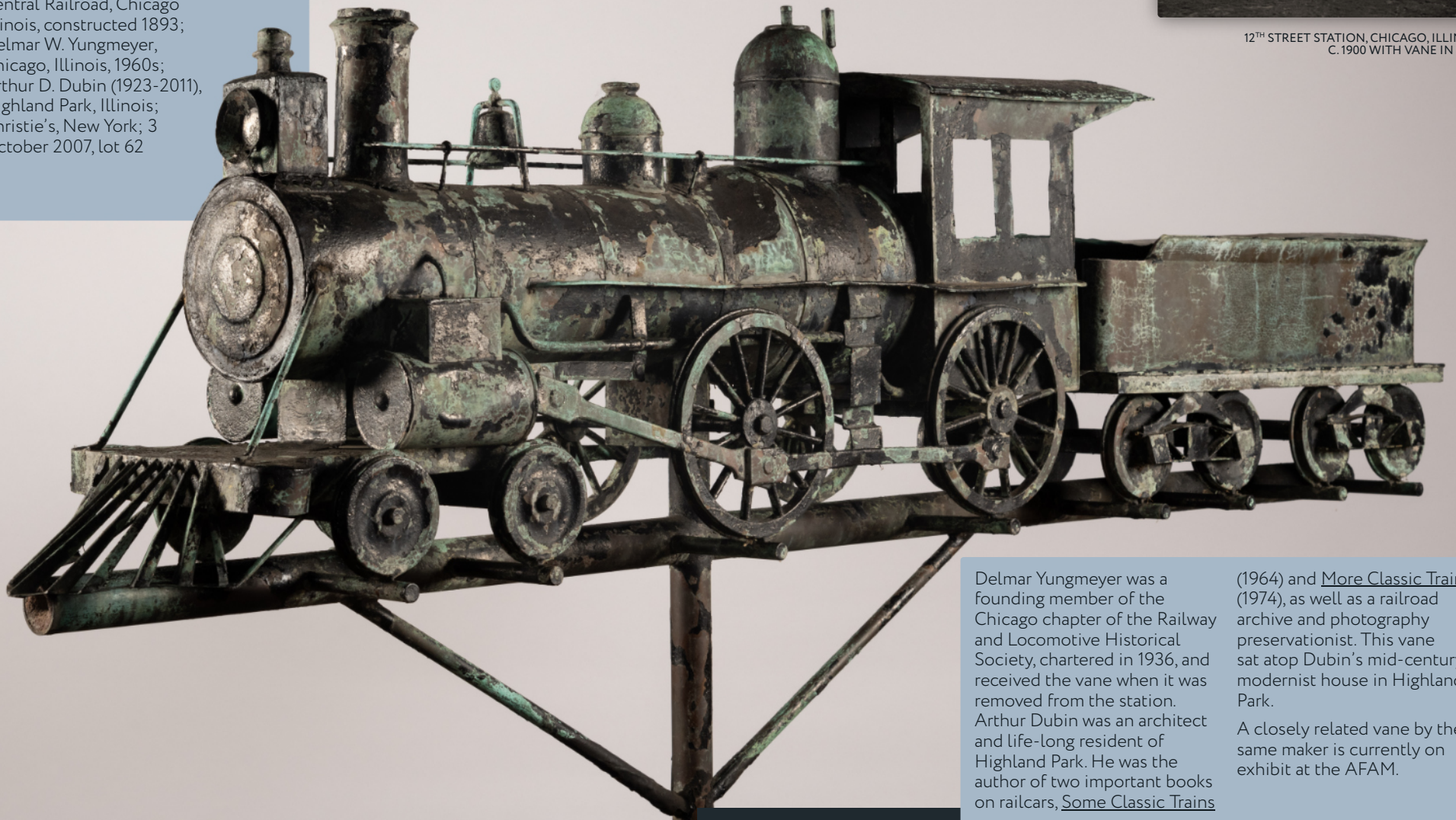
Molded copper and iron
with remnants of early black
paint and verdigris

Ht. 31", L. 74"

Removed from the Illinois
Central Railroad 12th Street
Station, Chicago, Illinois.

PROVENANCE

12th Street Station, Illinois
Central Railroad, Chicago
Illinois, constructed 1893;
Delmar W. Yungmeyer,
Chicago, Illinois, 1960s;
Arthur D. Dubin (1923-2011),
Highland Park, Illinois;
Christie's, New York; 3
October 2007, lot 62



12TH STREET STATION, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
C. 1900 WITH VANE IN SITU.

Delmar Yungmeyer was a founding member of the Chicago chapter of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, chartered in 1936, and received the vane when it was removed from the station. Arthur Dubin was an architect and life-long resident of Highland Park. He was the author of two important books on railcars, Some Classic Trains

(1964) and More Classic Trains (1974), as well as a railroad archive and photography preservationist. This vane sat atop Dubin's mid-century modernist house in Highland Park.

A closely related vane by the same maker is currently on exhibit at the AFAM.



Cod Fish

Maker Unknown, New England, c. 1880

Molded copper with a beautiful weathered verdigris surface with remains of early gold leaf

Ht. 10" L. 32"





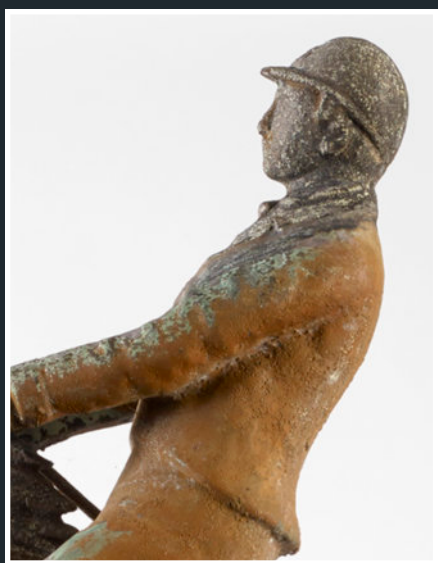
Dexter with Jockey

Cushing & White, Waltham,
Massachusetts, c. 1870

Molded copper, wire, and cast zinc
with an old, weathered painted and
verdigris surface

Ht. 15", L. 28"

Retaining the original label:
"Cushing & White, Waltham,
Mass./ Patent Applied For".





Dog

Attributed to E.G. Washburn & Co.,
New York City, c. 1890

Molded copper with a verdigris surface
and traces of yellow sizing and gold leaf

Ht. 16", W. 34"



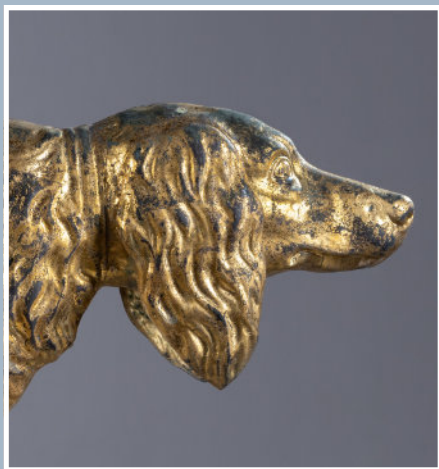
Dog

Possibly J.W. Fiske or A.J. Harris & Co.,
New York or Boston, c. 1875-90.

Molded copper with a weathered,
second gilding

Ht. 15", W. 33 ½"

This design was produced by several
manufacturers.





Large Rooster

J. Howard and Company, West Bridgewater,
MA, 1856-1867

Cast zinc and copper retaining a weathered,
yellow-painted surface

Ht. 27", W. 24 ½"

PROVENANCE: Chris Machmer, Annville,
Pennsylvania; Private Collection.



Small Rooster

J. Howard and Company,
West Bridgewater, MA, c. 1856-1867

Cast zinc and copper with a weathered patina
Ht. 12", L. 12"

PROVENANCE: "American Folk Art from the
Collection of Kendra and Allan Daniel",
Christie's, January 2001; Private Collection.



LEFT: HARRIOT S. CURTIS c. 1906
RIGHT: MARGARET CURTIS c. 1905

Lady Golfer

Maker Unknown, American,
c. 1900

Most likely a custom order
representing one of the Curtis sisters,
Margaret and Harriot.

Molded sheet copper and zinc with
a weathered verdigris patina

Ht. 44" (85" on the stand),
W. 38", D. 15"

PROVENANCE: Alice Kaplan, New York;
David Wheatcroft Antiques,
Westborough, MA; Private Collection.

LITERATURE: Steve Miller, *The Art of
the Weathervane* (1984), pg. 150.







Horse Jumping through Hoop

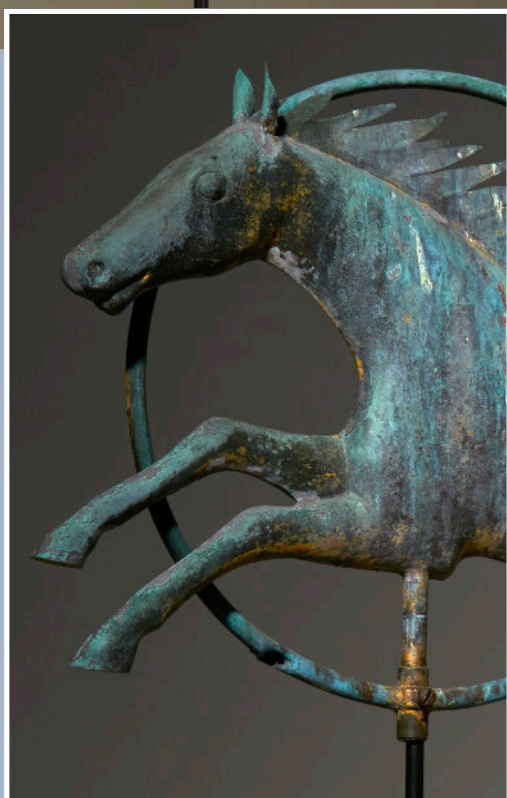
Attributed to A.L. Jewell & Co.
Waltham, MA, c. 1852-67

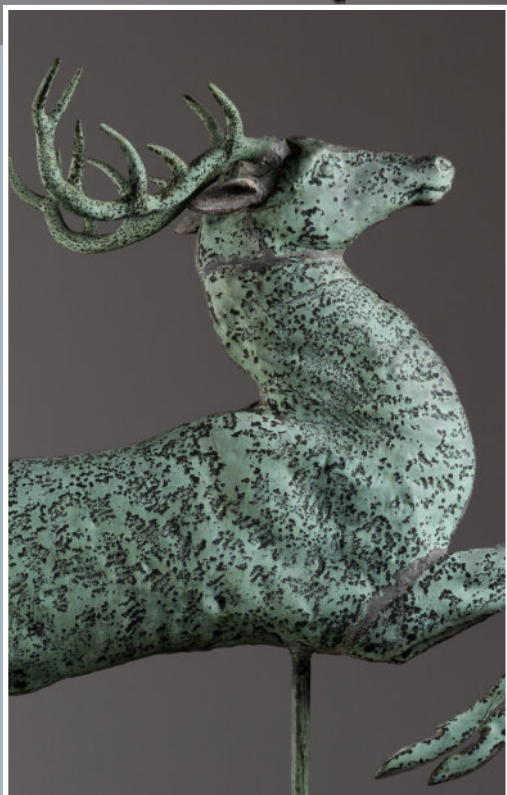
Molded copper with a fine
verdigris surface showing traces
of the original gold leaf

Ht. 13", W. 30 ½"

PROVENANCE: Giampietro;
Private Collection.

LITERATURE: Shaw, American
Weathervanes The Art of the
Winds, pg. 29.





Leaping Stag

Attributed to Harris & Company,
Boston, c. 1870-80

Molded copper with verdigris
patina

Ht. 27 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", W. 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", D. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

PROVENANCE: David Wheatcroft;
Private Collection.





Massasoit

Attributed to Harris & Co, Boston,
c.1870-80

Molded copper with weathered
paint history

Ht. 31", W. 30"

PROVENANCE: Runnymede Farm,
North Hampton, NH



Rooster

Pennsylvania, c. 1900

Sheet metal with an old white
and red painted finish

Ht. 38", W. 38"

PROVENANCE:

Private New York Collection.



Running Deer

Attributed to J.W. Fiske, New York City,
c. 1875

Molded copper, zinc antlers, retaining
an old weathered painted surface with
verdigris

Ht. 23 ½", W. 38"



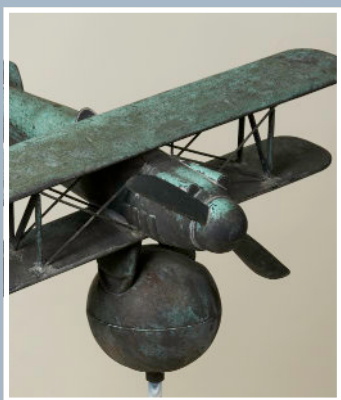
Biplane

Maker Unknown, American, c. 1920-40

Molded copper with a fine verdigris surface

Ht. on stand 20", W. 23 ½", D. 21 ½"

PROVENANCE: Allan Katz Americana; Private Collection.







Angel Gabriel

Maker unidentified, c. 1872

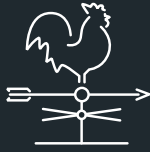
Molded copper with verdigris surface retaining traces of original gilding and paint sizing

Ht. 36 1/2", W. 65", D. 8 3/4"

PROVENANCE: Made for the Christian Chapel in Franklin, Ohio when it was constructed in 1872, removed in 2010; Giampietro; Private Collection.

LITERATURE: R. Scudder Smith, "Angel Gabriel Weathervane Comes Down To Earth," *Antiques and the Arts Weekly*, Feb. 8, 2011.





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September 23 – January 1, 2022

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