

# The Silver Service of the

The battleship Arizona was authorized by Congress during March of 1913, and launched a little over two years later at the Brooklyn Naval Yard at 1:12 pm on June 19, 1915. Weighing over 35,000 tons fully loaded, the 608 foot long Arizona had twelve 14 inch guns and 34,000 horsepower, producing a vessel touted as the world's most powerful warship.

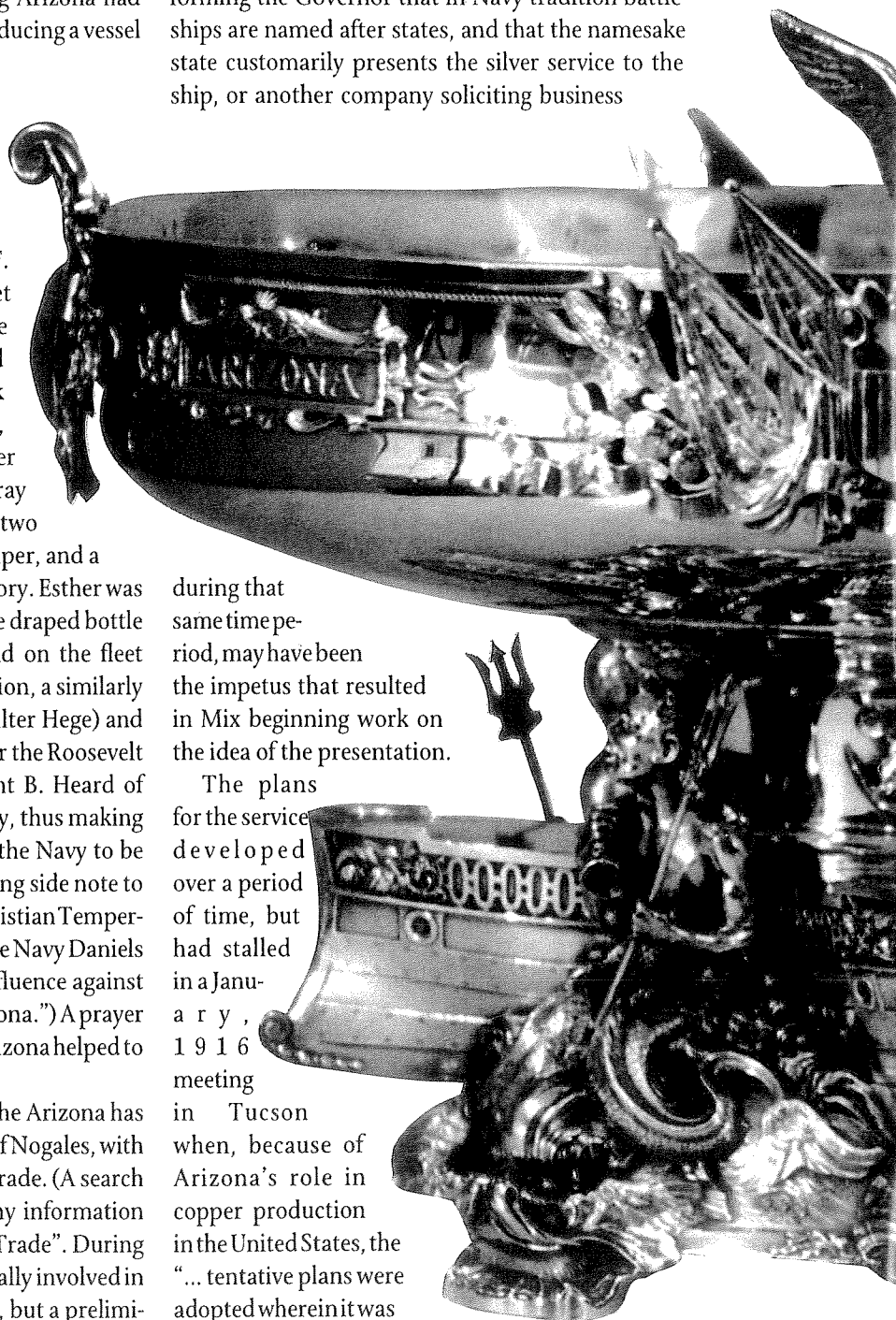
The christening ceremony was attended by 75,000 people, and at that time was said to be the largest crowd to witness a launching. The participants included Vice President Thomas Marshall, Navy Secretary Josephus Daniels, Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic fleet Admiral F.F. Fletcher, second in command of the Atlantic fleet Vice Admiral Mayo, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Leonard Wood, Arizona Governor George Hunt, New York Mayor John Mitchel, maids of honor Eve Behn, Salee King, and Marie Farroll, 17 year old Esther Ross of Prescott (later to become Mrs. Garrett Wray of Nogales) who was chosen to christen the ship, two of Esther's teachers, Mabel Peglow and Helen Piper, and a host of other notable figures from Arizona's history. Esther was given the honor of breaking a red, white and blue draped bottle of American champagne (which had been held on the fleet flagship Wyoming) over the ship's bow. In addition, a similarly draped copper-ribbed bottle (handmade by Walter Hege) and containing a sample of the first water to flow over the Roosevelt Dam Spillway (an idea spearheaded by Dwight B. Heard of Arizona) was broken on the side in the ceremony, thus making the Arizona the "first warship in the history of the Navy to be named with both water and wine". (An interesting side note to the christening is that the National Women's Christian Temperance Union had sent a telegram to Secretary of the Navy Daniels saying they believe he "will exert all possible influence against the use of alcoholic liquor in christening the Arizona.") A prayer by Bishop Atwood of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona helped to send the mighty ship into service.

The movement to present a silver service to the Arizona has been historically attributed to Mayor L.W. Mix of Nogales, with an eventual undertaking by the State Board of Trade. (A search of the capitol archive records did not reveal any information about a state organization called the "Board of Trade". During the early 1900's the "Board of Control" was typically involved in expenditures, bidding, and other state business, but a prelimi-

nary examination of those records did not reveal any information regarding the silver service). However, a letter from the Gorham Company in January of 1915 to Governor Hunt informing the Governor that in Navy tradition battleships are named after states, and that the namesake state customarily presents the silver service to the ship, or another company soliciting business

during that same time period, may have been the impetus that resulted in Mix beginning work on the idea of the presentation.

The plans for the service developed over a period of time, but had stalled in a January, 1916 meeting in Tucson when, because of Arizona's role in copper production in the United States, the "... tentative plans were adopted wherein it was



# USS Arizona

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proposed to present other offerings than a silver service, the material which should be chiefly copper as more representative of the state". However, the change from silver to copper was protested, and the original plan was reinstated (though the punch service was produced as copper with applied silver).

Mix, who was appointed the head of the launching committee by Governor Hunt, had

making a specialty of the type of work that was being sought. The company was requested to submit a proposal and, subsequently, designed 66 "life size so to speak" pieces of a combined silver and copper service for the Boards examination before award of the contract and provided that, if desired, specific designs could be changed. With a manufacturing cost in the vicinity of \$8,000.00, Reed and Barton was awarded the contract.

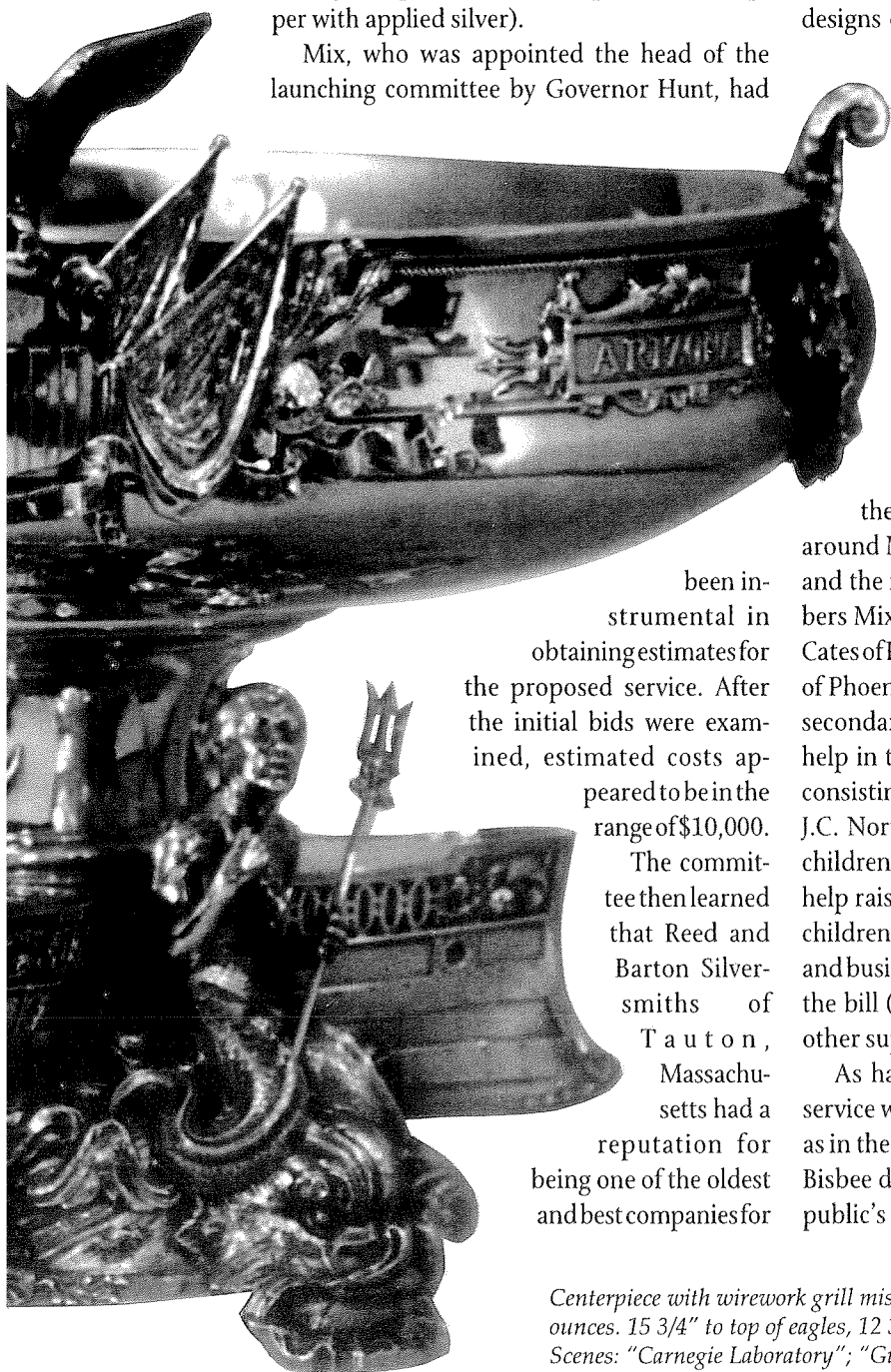
Reed and Barton's representative, Maurice R. Meade, met with the Board of Trade members and proposed that if the Board would "pledge its honest efforts" to begin a movement for raising money, the company would begin making the service. The intent was to allow pieces of the silver to be put on display in major towns of the state so the citizens could see what their donations were buying, and to have a chance to see the service before the presentation to the battleship.

With an agreement reached with Reed and Barton, the State Board of Trade named an additional committee around May of 1916 to assist in the undertaking of the project and the raising of money. The committee, consisting of members Mix (chairman), Allen T. Bird of Nogales (secretary), L.S. Cates of Ray, W. E. Bery from Flagstaff, and Thomas E. Campbell of Phoenix, helped design the fund raising efforts. In addition, secondary committees were formed once the project began to help in the fund raising, such as the Maricopa County group consisting of Dwight B. Heard (chairman), V.E. Hanny, and Dr. J.C. Norton. An article from the period indicates that school children sold tags on Memorial Day and Independence Day to help raise a portion of the money. The "pennies" raised by the children were combined with donations from private citizens and businesses to obtain the balance of the \$9,000.00 needed for the bill (the final price for the service seems to have included other supplemental costs such as shipping, etc.).

As had been suggested with the idea of fund raising, the service was shown in different locations around the state, such as in the windows of the Phelps Dodge Mercantile Company in Bisbee during early September, 1916. However, even with the public's ability to see what the contributions were to purchase,

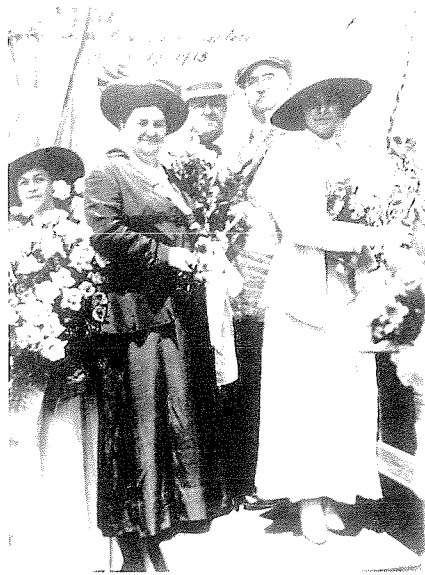
been instrumental in obtaining estimates for the proposed service. After the initial bids were examined, estimated costs appeared to be in the range of \$10,000.

The committee then learned that Reed and Barton Silver-smiths of Taunton, Massachusetts had a reputation for being one of the oldest and best companies for



Centerpiece with wirework grill missing. Reed & Barton #S296. Approximately 417.1 troy ounces. 15 3/4" to top of eagles, 12 3/4" to rim of bowl; 20 1/2" diameter of bowl. Scenes: "Carnegie Laboratory"; "Gila Monster"

the overall fund raising appears to have fallen significantly short as indicated by an October 9, 1916 advertisement for "a patriotic call for contributions" to be taken to any bank in order to help defray the costs. Apparently even the "call" was not completely satisfactory as indicated by an article a week later stating that a delegation went before the Board of County Supervisors and asked for \$1600.00 as Maricopa County's share of the cost of the service. The tag day "had failed to raise anything near the amount of the cost of the service and the expense of exhibiting it." The \$1600.00 was based on the proration of assessed valuation of Maricopa County to the balance of the state. A formal claim for the money was filed against the County on October 18, 1916. Additional donations were sought for the sil-



Left to right: Eve Behn; Mrs. W. W. Ross; Navy Secretary, Josephus Daniels; Governor, George Hunt; Esther Ross of Prescott.

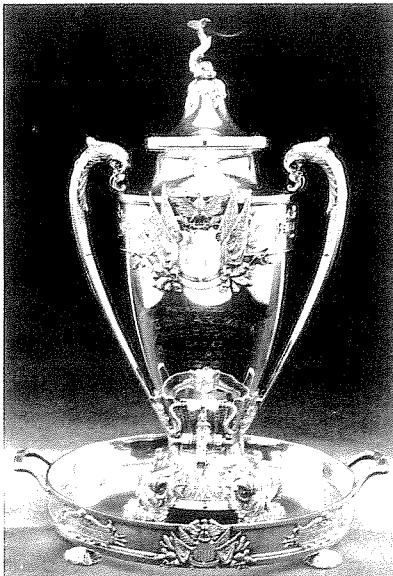
was offered for contributions towards the service.

Considering that Reed and Barton appeared to have begun the process several months before the Arizona's commissioning, that part, if not all, of the service was available for public display in September, and the 1916 presentation date on the coffee urn, it would seem that the intended time for the presentation may have been the October 17, 1916 commissioning ceremony. However, the service was not presented to the ship until an apparently low fanfare ceremony of December 27, 1919. The reason for the delay in presentation is speculative, but may have been due to the problem in obtaining the funds needed as well as the coinciding interruption of World War I.

The service that was presented contains several impressive examples of the

ver while it was on display at the State Fair of November, 1916. As an incentive, a souvenir

silversmith's art. All of the items, except the punch set which is primarily of copper with silver accents and applied decorations, were of sterling silver. The pieces of the set are emblazoned with the state seal and naval arms, and have a well blended decorative



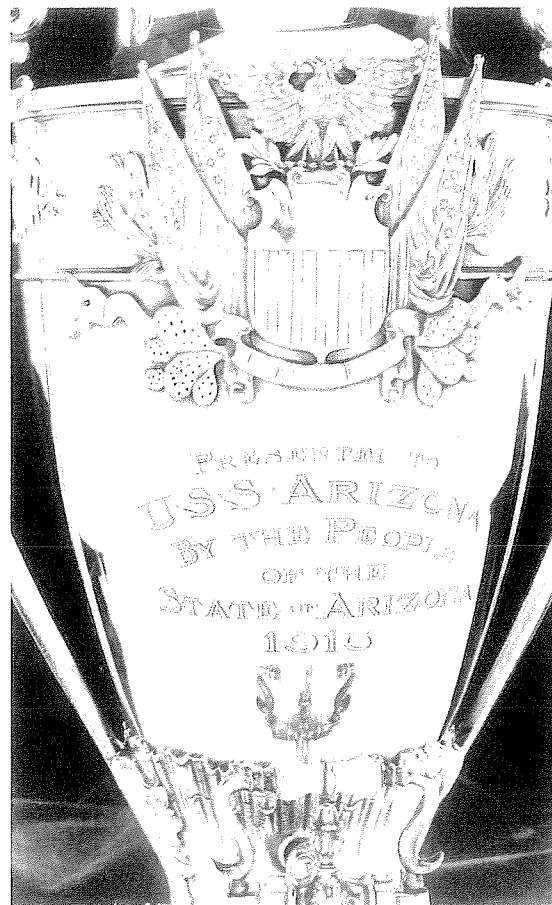
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Above: Coffee Urn complete with flags, eagles, and cactus. 152.73 troy ounces. 22 7/8" tall; 17 1/16" top of handles; 13 1/4" across handles.

Scenes: "University Building"; "Presented to U.S.S. Arizona by the People of the State of Arizona 1916."

Reed & Barton # S 102

Right: Close-up of Coffee Urn. On reverse is the University Building.



motif that consists of saguaros, dolphins, shells, waves, and floral designs. In addition, a number of the larger items have scenes from around the state etched into them, such as the "Grand Canyon of the Colorado" and "Roosevelt Dam" on the punch bowl, "San Xavier Del Bac Mission" on one of the footed bowls, a "Hualapi Village" on one of the large bread baskets, etc. Aside from being decorated with the "University Building", the coffee urn also has the inscription "Presented to U.S.S. Arizona by the People of the State of Arizona 1916". Several of the scenes on other pieces, such as a pair of large compotes with "Arizona: Progress and Civilization" and "Irrigation: The Wedding of the Water and the Land", were taken from murals such as "Spirit of Arizona" and "Irrigation" by Lawrence Alonzo (Lon) Megargee (1883-1960) of Cottonwood, Arizona.

The USS Arizona remained in

service in various capacities from the time of the christening until the assignment to the Pacific Fleet and the stationing at Pearl Harbor. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on the morning of December 7, 1941, the Arizona was sunk with 337 of the crew surviving, and 1177 lives lost. The battleship was considered a total loss, and was never raised or extensively salvaged. Today the ship still rests at the bottom of the Harbor, and is a national memorial to those who are entombed.

On May 5, 1952, Arizona Governor Pyle wrote to the Department of the Navy in an attempt to have the battleship's silver service returned to the state for display in the State Capitol Museum. The Navy agreed to the return, but indicated that the silver was being used aboard the USS Adirondack. According to the documentation, during July of 1951, the silver was placed on the Adirondack which was serving as the flagship of the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces, Southern Europe. The service had been selected because "This set was, and still is, one of the finest in service in the Navy". The Navy further stated that the service could not be forwarded until the ship returned to American waters.

In a letter of June 23, 1953, Rear Admiral H.N. Wallin advised Governor Pyle that the Adirondack had returned, and that the silver had been placed at the Naval Supply Center in Norfolk, Virginia. Arrangements were made for the silver to be transferred to Arizona and to be under the direction of the State Fair Commission (which was in charge of all of the State's major exhibits). The entire service was appraised at a total amount of \$20,000.00 for shipping and insurance purposes. According to a July 3, 1953 letter from the Naval Supply Center in Norfolk, 87 pieces of silver were inventoried for transfer. The pieces included 2 candelabra, 1 water pitcher, 2 incomplete smoking trays, 1 cigar box with the wooden bottom broken, 4 vases, 4 candlesticks, 14 candle holders of which four were broken, 14 bases for the candle holders, centerpiece with an eagle broken off and missing, 12 goblets that were scratched, dented, or pitted, 2 glass bottom trays, 2



*The entire collection of the U.S.S. Arizona silver on exhibit at the State Capitol Museum.*

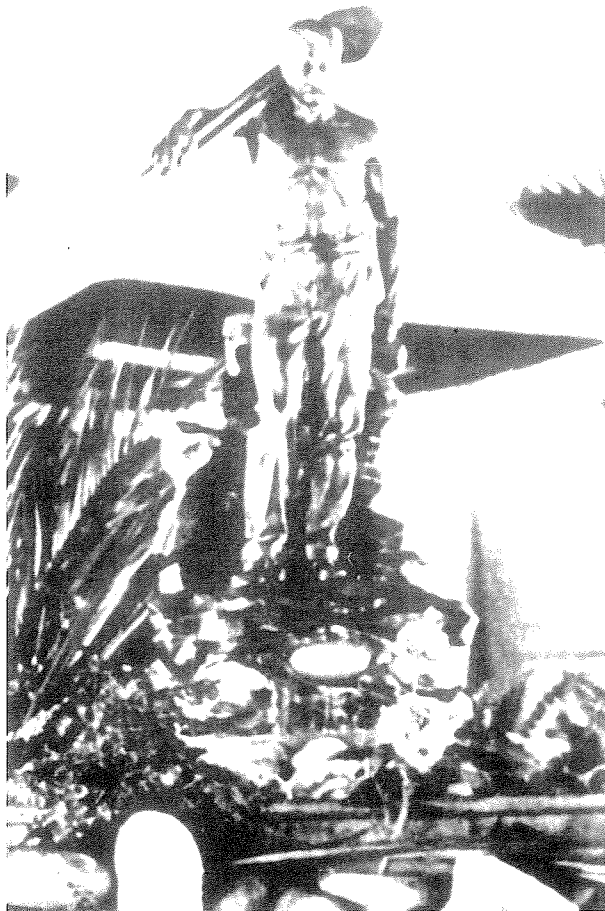
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salad bowls, 1 coffee urn with the spigot handle broken off, 2 serving trays, 4 sandwich trays of which one was dented, 1 punch bowl with an eagle broken off and missing, 2 large compotes, 4 small compotes, 12 goblets of burnished copper and inlaid silver, one of which was dented and one pitted, 1 waiter of burnished copper, and 1 silver inlaid punch ladle.

The original number of pieces of the Arizona service is somewhat unclear. Reed and Barton's records of the service as well as those of Rosenzweig Jewelers, an Arizona company that reportedly was involved in the purchase of the silver, have been lost, so as of the present time there does not appear to be any factual listing of the actual service pieces. The original service proposed by Reed and Barton was said to consist of 66 pieces, with a 1916



*Left: Bronze statue of a copper miner with a pick. Enlarged from a postcard taken of the quarterdeck of the U.S.S. Arizona, Callao, Peru, July 28, 1921. Photo courtesy of Joseph K. Langdell.\**

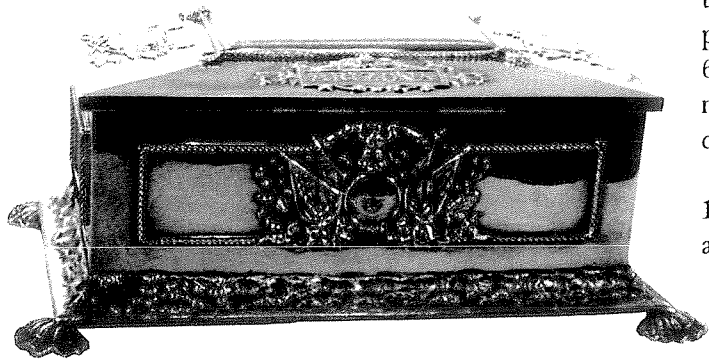


*Above: Punch Bowl — copper with applied silver. Approximately 363.9 troy ounces. 18 3/8" to top of eagle; 14 1/4" to top of 9 1/2" deep bowl, 18 5/16" bowl diameter, 30 1/4" wreath to wreath. Scenes: "Roosevelt Dam"; "Grand Canyon of the Colorado" Reed and Barton # S 407*

*Below: Close-up of scene "Roosevelt Dam"*  
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article listing only 64. The 64 reported did not include an additional 2 small compotes presently in the service, or the 14 candleholders and the 14 bases listed on the transfer inventory. However, the service mentioned in the 1916 article did include 6 "raviars" and a bronze statue of a copper miner with a pick and a candlestick in his hands. Furthermore, a photograph of the silver service taken on the deck of the Arizona (around 1931) does contain what appear to be 6 small dishes, possibly the mentioned "raviars", and 4 serving pieces (spoons or forks) that are not in the current service, but does not show the glass bottom trays or the candlestick and candelabra shade extensions. Though the statue of the miner is not men-



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*Above: Cigar Box; 108.52 troy ounces including wood liner; 13 1/4" long, 8" wide, 5 1/4" tall.*

*Scenes: "Tumacacori Mission"; Ostriches; sheep; a cowboy herding cattle. Reed and Barton #S 140.*

*Below: Close-up of Sheep scene.*



tioned in the transfer inventory or shown in the deck photo, a picture published in Stillwell's book "Battleship Arizona" (page 67) does show a 40 inch tall bronze statue of the miner, which normally stood by the Captain's quarters, on the deck of the ship during an August 1, 1921 visit to Callao, Peru.

Further confusion on the number of pieces was added by a 1975 newspaper article indicating that the 14 candle holders and 14 bases listed in the 1953 inventory were reported as having been lost or stolen sometime between 1953 and 1956 when the service was supposedly stored in boxes under the grandstands at the state fairgrounds. However, a current inventory of the silver indicates that the pieces were not lost, and that the missing items were simply removable extensions of the candelabra and candlesticks that were reattached and therefore "lost" because the total number of pieces had decreased by 28 items. However, if the miner in Stillwell's book and the serving pieces and dishes from the photograph were actual parts of the

original service, they could be considered unaccounted for at the present time, as is the wirework grill for the centerpiece. The shades for the candelabra and candlesticks are also unaccounted for if in fact they were part of the original service).

The silver set was displayed under heavy guard at the Arizona State Fair between November 6th and 15th, 1953, and, most likely, during 1954 and 1955 after being brought out of storage. In 1956 the silver service was transferred into the custody of the First National Bank of Arizona for display in their Arizona Room in central Phoenix. The service was returned annually to the State Fair, and was placed back at the bank after the fair ended. The service was in the possession of the bank for approximately 20 years before being turned back to the custody of the State for placement in burglar-proof cases in the Tower Mezzanine at the Capitol Building in Phoenix. The service has remained in the Capitol complex since that time. Parts of the service, such as the punch bowl, had been periodically removed from display for use in State functions hosted by the Governor, a practice that was short lived.

For a number of years following the war, and even though the silver was officially accounted for on a continuous basis, various rumors of what had happened to the silver service were circulated. For example, one story suggested that the silver had been auctioned off as part of a war bond drive. Another indicated that

*Left: Four Vases.  
31.83; 32.15; 32.15; 32.32 troy ounces.  
15 7/8" tall; 6" diameter.  
Reed and Barton #S647.*

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the silver had been displayed in the windows of various shops. However, the most popular belief was that the silver had been on the USS Arizona when the ship was sunk at Pearl Harbor, but had since been salvaged. Comments about how good the overall condition was considering the silver had been in the attack, statements concerning visible salt water influences on the silver, etc., helped to perpetuate the “going down with the ship” viewpoint. For example, a 1953 brochure published by the Arizona State Fair Commission indicated that “the set is intact as originally inventoried except for several small items and minor mutilations. Most of the pieces are in excellent condition despite the battering at Pearl Harbor. As received, some of the pieces were still discolored from the stained and debris-strewn seawater off Ford’s Island”. A newspaper article of 1953 also indicated that “some of the pieces are pocked and dented and a few are lastingly discolored from flaming oil and seawater”.

An attempt to clarify the actual location of the silver during the attack was made by members of the Capitol staff during 1973. The staff members reviewed available documentation, including newspaper articles regarding the silver, brochures from the State Fair Commission, a letter stating that the silver was salvaged from the Arizona and sent to Mare Island, California (with unaccounted for history until it is placed back in use aboard the USS Adirondack in 1951), and the June, 1952 letter from the office of the Secretary of the Navy to Governor Pyle.

The Secretary’s letter indicates that the service was moved from the USS Arizona during 1940 upon the ships transfer to Pearl Harbor. The silver remained in storage until April, 1947 when the service was placed aboard the USS Tucson. Upon decommissioning of the Tucson in 1949, the silver was apparently returned to storage until the service was called up for use on the USS Adirondack. The staff concluded that there was more substantial evidence to indicate the silver was off of the Arizona at the time of the sinking, and any damage and discoloration could be accounted for by general use, handling, transportation, and normal oxidation.

In order to further substantiate the conclusion of the Capitol staff from primary source rather than historical information, the author placed a call for information in the newsletter of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, where several of the association members had served aboard the Arizona and would have first-hand knowledge. Responses by several of the members indicated that the silver, which was normally in a glass and wood display cabinet on the ship, had indeed been removed

from the Arizona as part of a “stripping” that takes place when a ship enters into a war zone, thus supporting the 1952 letter from the Secretary of the Navy. However, one survivor indicated that during January of 1942, he had seen a diver bring up what appeared to be heavy silver flatware from the Arizona. Though he did not recall seeing other pieces recovered, the statement supported, at least to some degree, salvaging of the silver service.

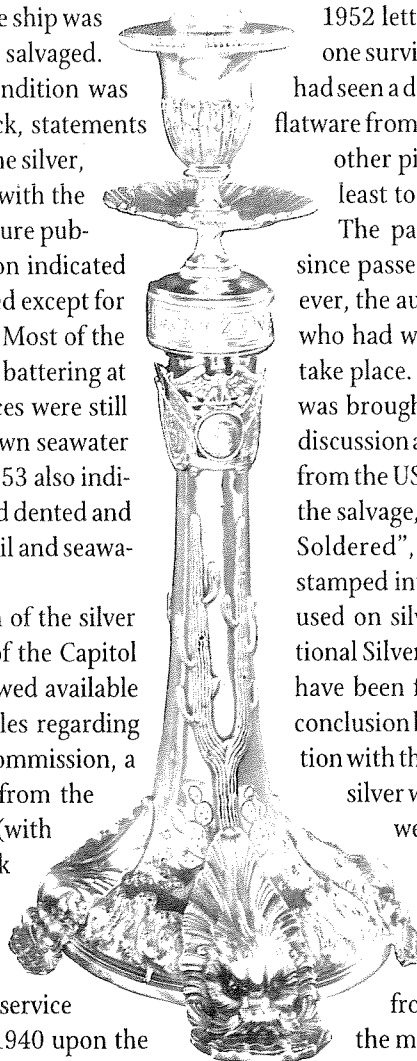
The particular diver that had been observed had since passed away, so no follow-up was possible. However, the author was fortunate to contact a second diver who had worked on what salvaging of the Arizona did take place. The diver indicated that, in fact, some silver was brought up from the sunken ship. However, upon discussion about one of the pieces that had been retrieved from the USS Arizona and was felt to be representative of the salvage, the marks “International Silver Co.,” “Silver Soldered”, “015200” and “12-TN” were reportedly stamped into the back of the piece. The marks are those used on silver plated objects produced by the International Silver Company, and not the markings that would have been found on the Reed and Barton service. The conclusion based on the previous information in conjunction with the obtained findings indicates that while some

silver was salvaged from the USS Arizona, the pieces were most likely board room or daily use pieces, and that the presentation service was, undoubtedly, not aboard the Arizona.

Another communication with an Arizona crewman who had served on the ship from 1935 to 1940 indicated that the statue of the miner was on the ship for part, if not all of that time period. The crewman remembered a bronze or copper “forty-niner” standing in the region of the captains quarters. Additional research into the location of the statue needs to be con-

ducted, with a starting place being documents about what was taken off the ship at the stripping or other inventory listings. Most likely the statue was separated from the silver service at that time or when the silver was reassigned since most personnel involved with the silver would probably not have recognized the bronze miner as part of the original presentation service.

At the present time the State Capitol Museum has permanent possession of the silver service, and maintains the silver on constant display in the Arizona State Capitol in Phoenix. The service, for the historical implications, the emotional symbolism, and the superb artistic qualities produces an impressive display.



*One of four candlesticks with extensions en suite with 029-030 candelabra. Approximately 31.35 troy ounces. 15 1/4" tall without extensions, 24 1/4" with extensions. Reed and Barton #S 335.*

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\*Joseph K. Langdell, a survivor of the Pearl Harbor attack, is reunion coordinator for the U.S.S. Arizona Reunion Association, Inc.

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