BORDERS ON BUTTONS: Introduction

Buttons are enriched by the use of borders. You will discover borders made from other materials, with contrasting or like decorative finishes, manifesting construction techniques, illustrated with patterns/symbols/pictorials, and of varying shapes. This series will be written and printed in collaboration with the Minnesota Button Bulletin. WRBA is indebted to the support of the Minnesota editor, Claudia Chalmers, for her time, button wisdom, and technical talent.

Claudia Chalmers and Joy Journee will be authoring and illustrating this series. If you have buttons that you can scan to illustrate these topics, we welcome having them! Please put “Button Borders” in the subject line of an email and send the scans to cjoy@scsi.net

As the foundation of our study we shall use the Official NBS Classification (our beloved “Blue Book”) and the excellent exploration of borders written by Shirley Hutson and published in the May 1999 NBS Bulletin on Pages 85-104.

As we examine borders, we shall try to understand the contributing aspects and illustrate with multiple examples to solidify our understanding.

If you have border topics you would like addressed, shoot an email or note to Joy Journee (contact info on inside cover) and we will be sure to address it in this series. People’s questions help us think and see things in a new light. We welcome your help as we quest for knowledge and clarification!

Through this series, we will explore what qualifies as a border. In preparation for the articles that follow, consider the buttons on these two pages and notice parts of the button construction and design that could be considered a border. Do they meet the criteria from our classification book?” (see below).

Joy Journee

from the Official NBS Classification 2009/2010 Awards Edition

SECTION 23 - 4 Borders Assorted That portion of a button’s face design which lies between the center and the outer edge. It may be any width, but it must “border” a plain or decorative center of any size or shape. Refer to May 1999 NBS Bulletin.

WRBA Issue Borders on Buttons Topic
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2008 #3 July Construction Study (outer, frame, rim, edge, interrupted)
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Enjoy! Please join WRBA! Go to www.WRBA.us

WRBA gladly offers our articles for reprint, as long as credit is given to WRBA as the source.
Buttons on this page are from the collection of Joni Goldbarg, CA.

Here is a lovely united two-layer pearl button. Cut steels hold the two pieces together and also form a six-point star shape in the center of the button.

Do you think the swirl shapes forming the ring about the cut steels constitute a border? Can we say that it borders "a plain or decorative center of any size or shape"?

To the right is a black glass button with paint-filled incised lines. You might view the stylized painted lines as the focus of the button. Can we say that they border "a plain or decorative center of any size or shape"? Then they constitute a border.

Note that a plain black ring encircles the painted line area. Can we say that this button has two borders: the thin plain border and the painted border? Can we say that the button has four borders: plain black, gold line, painted shapes, and gold line?

While we are considering multiple borders, how many are present on these background buttons?

On the left do we consider the rope edge, then the row of cut steels, then the double twisted set? Do we consider the eight star arms part of the central design or a border around the central paste? Questions, questions, questions!!!!

I am sure we all agree that borders significantly enhance the beauty of our buttons!

In the next Territorial News issue, we will discuss border construction.