

April 2008 Newsletter

Randall's Lost NYC



As I begin this month's newsletter the snow is still piled up outside my window, I'm sure we will all be happy to see spring!

Recently, after seeing some photos (Deja Vu) of the NYC subways I decided to begin work on two models which threaten to be the beginning of at the very least- a small subway *series*.

The first (shown above) is a model done full scale (14" x 22-1/2") of extant beaver plaques which can be seen in the historic Astor Place station of the IRT line. The station was opened in October, 1904 and the ceramics were made by the well known Grueby-Faience Company who also made a variety of ceramic items, many of which are highly collectible antiques.

The beaver plaques were done in tribute to magnate John Jacob Astor, for whom Astor Place was named. This station is the only one which has these plaques, and they are the largest of their type in the system. Astor made his early fortune with beaver pelts which explains the beaver design.

My model is Nr S1-R and is faithful to the original, with but slight

differences- a little more fine detail and differences in the rocks.

This will be available in both cast-stone and I'm hoping terra-cotta, as I have plans to invest this summer in a large kiln to begin production of a limited number of my designs in that material, the beaver would be the first in this material.

The second subway model (S2-R) is the eagle plaque;



also originally by Grueby. The design in the subway has two variations in form, these were installed at the Brooklyn Bridge, 14th street (Union Square,) and 33rd street where a National Guard armory once stood on 34th and Park Avenue. Around 1973 it was destroyed for another glass box high rise.

My model is after the 14th street version and will have the number "14" on it's shield. I chose this one over the other version as it is the only one which has a nice square shape. This too will be available in cast-stone and I hope terra-cotta as well.

When done in terra-cotta the number "14" could be replaced with another number, such as your house number.