Primary Maker: Lewis Fueter
Title: Salver presented to Captain Thomas Sowers (1740–1774)
Date: 1772–1773
Medium: Silver
Dimensions: Overall: 21 3/4 × 1 1/2 in., 95 oz (troy) 4.6 dwt (55.2 × 3.8 cm, 2962 g)
Credit Line: Gift of J. Lawrence Aspinwall
Object Number: 1928.24

Object Name: Salver
Classification: SILVER

Curatorial Remarks:
Measuring almost twenty-two inches in diameter and embellished with extraordinary engraving depicting the seal of the City of New York, this salver stands as a masterpiece of colonial American presentation silver. On March 13, 1773, Royal Governor William Tryon (1729-1788) and the General Assembly of New York presented the engineer Captain Thomas Sowers (1740-1774) with this magnificent salver as a token of appreciation for his services in repairing the Battery at the tip of Manhattan, a critical site for the defense of the colonies. Sowers, a young but experienced British army engineer, publicly acknowledged the extravagant gift two days later in the New-York Gazette and Weekly Mercury, thanking Tryon for the "Piece of Plate" and affirming his willingness to be "ever ready to give my Assistance as an Engineer on any future Occasion. . . ."
Physical Description:
Wrought silver presentation salver; circular tray with raised, nine lobed sides with an applied molded and gadrooned rim; floral border engraved around the edge of the tray; center of the tray engraved with the Seal of the City of New York, windmill blades divide two beavers and two cider barrels, engraved around this, "This Piece of Plate is the Gift of His Exely. Govr. Tryon, the Genel.: Assemy.: of New-York, to Capt. Sowers Engineer. 13 Mar.h 1773" in roman letters, between a man in Colonial dress holding a plumb line and a Native American holding a bow, each with one hand raised, colonial man touching a fleet of ships, Native American touching a wooded area; seal surmounted by a crown and foliate scrolls and above a banner engraved, "SIGILL/ CIVITAT * NOV/ EBORA" over crossed cannons and military and engineering implements; tray applied to three cast hairy paw feet with five claws, one back, four forward, around a circular bar; descent of the salver engraved on the reverse; maker's mark stamped on the base.

Markings: Mark stamped on the base: "L. Feuter" in script in a conforming rectangle at reverse near bottom right foot; engraved script at reverse on the base: "This piece of plate / was given to Captain Thomas Sowers in 1773, / who gave it to his daughter / Ann, / wife of Gilbert Aspinwall, / who gave it to her daughter, / Sarah Ann, / wife of James Lawrence Moore, / who gave it to her nephew, / James Lawrence Aspinwall, (great grandson of Captain Thomas Sowers,) / who presented it to his wife / Mary Morris Carnochan, / on their wedding day / June 4th 1891. / James Lawrence Aspinwall / Presents this plate to / the New York Historical Society / January 17th, 1928."; scratch weight on reverse: "Oz. dwt. / 97.9"

Related Objects: