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**“I HATE PRETTY WORK”: MADELINE YALE WYNNE AND THE
AMERICAN CRAFT REVIVAL**

by
Jessica H. Beels

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Early American
Culture

Spring 1995

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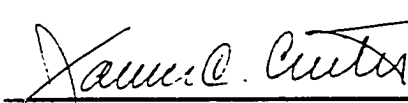
Approved:



J. Ritchie Garrison, Ph.D.

Professor in charge of thesis on behalf of the Advisory Committee

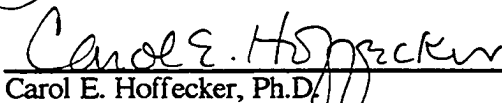
Approved:



James C. Curtis, Ph.D.

Director of the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture

Approved:



Carol E. Hoffercker, Ph.D.

Associate Provost for Graduate Studies

-

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the life and work of Madeline Yale Wynne, a craftsperson, painter, and writer active during American craft revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While highly acclaimed in her own time, especially for her short stories and her jewelry, Wynne is rarely acknowledged as a noteworthy figure in present-day exhibitions and essays addressing the American craft revival. Her biography serves as a case study for how closer examination of one participant's contribution can influence interpretations of the revival as a whole.

This study focuses primarily on Wynne's jewelry and the circumstances leading to her involvement in the American Arts and Crafts movement. A review of primary sources--surviving objects, photographs of missing objects, correspondence, and contemporary articles--offers a clear picture of how various aspects of her upbringing and personal life, as well as contemporary cultural trends, influenced how the artist approached her work and the type of objects she made.

Wynne's life was complex. The contributing cultural factors governing major decisions she made and obstacles she encountered beg a broader interpretation of the influences of other craft revival contributors.

Why Madeline Yale Wynne?

Mrs. Wynne's metal work still keeps unchallenged place for beauty and originality. She could not do a commonplace thing and she never repeated herself. Her fresh spirit acted and reacted on vanquished metals--copper, silver, gold--in graceful curves and novel lines. Stones were encircled, crystals suspended, amber enfolded in coils, rings, and chains that send us to the woods to find their lovely counterparts, since histories of art do not reveal them. -- Lydia Avery Coonley Ward¹

Critics and historians of the nineteenth-century English and American craft revivals usually judge objects produced by their participants on the basis of visual analysis. Because little is known about most of these artisans, let alone the production of each individual object, this approach is convenient, and sometimes necessary. In addition, the immediacy of certain qualities of work associated with the craft revival, such as exotic or naturalistic forms, encourages this approach. Craft revival artisans celebrated a credo of freedom of expression through a general preference that every thing they produced be handwrought and one-of-a-kind. Some participants in the revival believed that handwork contributed to the rehumanization of the worker during an increasingly industrial age. These philosophers and craftspeople hoped that the presence of individually produced and visually unique objects would rejuvenate people's lives, especially those of the working class. Others sought an escape from the rigors of the city, hoping to find relief for themselves in the seemingly simpler and inspirational

¹ Henry Blake Fuller, ed., In Memory of Madeleine [sic] Yale Wynne (Chicago, the author: 1918), 12.

setting of a small community or commune based loosely on medieval guild structures. An observer with knowledge of the additional social justifications given for the artisans' work is encouraged to form a visceral, one-on-one reaction to the objects. American Arts and Crafts² enthusiasts often produced objects that display the basic formal requirements prescribed by English idealists John Ruskin, William Morris, and others in their treatises on craft production and philosophy.³ These objects often display natural or organic forms produced through skilled work with hand tools; incorporate medieval and arcadian themes and bird, flower, and celtic knot motifs; and comprise unpretentious materials, such as brass, unfaceted gems, and oak.⁴ Scholars of the Arts and Crafts movement study craftsmen and objects that were inspired, at least in part, by these English idealists.

The current trend to refer to the Arts and Crafts movement as a coherent whole rather than as an umbrella for a large variety of individuals is misleading and inaccurate. People who were interested in the revival of handwrought crafts were

² I will use the phrase "Arts and Crafts" only in reference to objects or people that are specifically labeled as such in contemporary sources.

³ For a comprehensive discussion of the origins of the Arts and Crafts movement in England, see Gillian Naylor, The Arts and Crafts Movement: A Study of Its Sources, Ideals, and Influence on Design Theory (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1980): 11-169.

⁴ Contemporary how-to books and articles in American craft society magazines such as Handicraft and House Beautiful re-emphasize the preferences for certain motifs and materials: Mary Allen, "How They Do It in Deerfield," Handicraft 3, no. 11 (February 1911): 406-10; George F. Kunz, "Precious Stones: Their Manipulation and Application in the Arts," Handicraft 3, no. 10 (January 1911): 347-53 and 4, no. 11 (February 1911): 387-392; Laurin H. Martin, "Jewelry Making," Handicraft 3, no. 7 (October 1910): 252-60; Harriet Monroe, "An Easter Bride's Chest," House Beautiful. (May 1902): 365-66; Henry Wilson, Silverwork and Jewellery (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1902).

motivated by more than the desire to follow the instructions of Ruskin and Morris. They lived in complex social environments and incorporated the many facets of their lives into the objects they produced. Madeline Yale Wynne's work reflects the complexity of the world around her. Her work was more a product of her time than an attempt to conform to the tenets of the Arts and Crafts movement. While Madeline's⁵ metalwork and other crafts certainly fall safely within the parameters set forward by the people defining the movement, such a narrow interpretation of her work ignores Madeline's contributions to other fields. She maintained an active writing career and contributed to various literary groups in Chicago and Boston. Madeline's interest in transcendentalist philosophy adds a spiritual twist to the understanding of her work and her character. Acknowledging these outside influences helps explain how Madeline's craftwork differed from that of contemporary Arts and Crafts enthusiasts. Madeline's jewelry designs strayed from the norm. Her jewelry appears more massive and less polished (both literally and figuratively) than examples by co-contributors to craft exhibitions. Nonetheless Madeline's work was accepted and praised in its time as part of the Arts and Crafts genre.

While names such as Louis Comfort Tiffany, Gustav Stickley, and Jane Addams are widely recognized as contributors to late nineteenth-century American culture, even avid readers of publications on the Arts and Crafts movement may not have heard of Madeline Yale Wynne. Those publications that do mention her described

⁵ I have chosen to refer to Madeline Yale Wynne as "Madeline" throughout this discussion because I will describe her entire life, during which she changed her last name twice. Her first name has been spelled at least three different ways in her own signature, in correspondence addressed to her, and in printed documents by and about her. "Madeline" is the spelling most frequently used in the sources I reviewed.

her as a minor contributor to the growing interest in hand-wrought crafts. In the late nineteenth century, however, Madeline Yale Wynne's peers admired her work. In exhibition reviews in Handicraft and House Beautiful magazines, they extolled her above most other jewelers. Her short stories were published in major periodicals, such as The Atlantic Monthly and Outlook, spreading her name beyond the realm of crafts enthusiasts. One short story in particular, "The Little Room," was so well known that she was repeatedly referred to as its author in bylines of later published stories. "The Little Room" was also the inspiration for a Chicago literary group of the same name and of which Madeline was a member.

Madeline was one of the founders of the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society in 1897, along with Ellen Gates Starr, Jane Addams, and others.⁶ Within the crafts community, Madeline's contributions were significant. She, along with Margaret Whiting, Ellen Miller, Frances and Mary Allen, and others, established the Deerfield, Massachusetts, arts and crafts industry in 1899.⁷ Among Deerfield's craftspeople, Madeline was one of two metalworkers exhibiting at the village's annual crafts exhibitions; she also started a raffia basketry group. An active metalworker who also delved into other craft techniques such as woodwork, leatherwork, embroidery, and basket-making, Madeline contributed many articles to the Chicago-based publication

⁶ Hull House Bulletin 2, no. 8 (December 1897): 9.

⁷ The Society of Deerfield Industries (Deerfield, MA: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 1919): 1.

House Beautiful.⁸ She also wrote essays for the magazine Handicraft, published by the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston. Her articles addressed many aspects of the rising interest in handwrought crafts. Some explored topics of an historic nature, reflecting an interest in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century American daily life and the objects made and used by American colonists, particularly in New England. Other articles reviewed crafts exhibitions in Deerfield and Chicago, in many of which Madeline participated.⁹

Contemporary photographs, admiring descriptions of her metalwork, and her distinguished reputation as a writer and general contributor to the crafts communities of which she was a member, indicate that Madeline Yale Wynne deserves more recognition than she has recently received. One basic reason for Madeline's omission from the recent accounts of the Arts and Crafts movement is that very few objects made by her have been identified. The few objects that have been attributed to her are linked to her through provenance and bear no maker's mark. Her name appears on one object, an etched brass bowl, engraved into the bottom—hardly a standard maker's mark. The

⁸ During its earlier years House Beautiful published articles discussing developing crafts communities and their activities. Later, the magazine focused more specifically on home improvement and decoration.

⁹ Articles by Madeline Yale Wynne published in these two magazines include: "Brides and Bridal Chests," House Beautiful 6, no. 4 (September 1899): 159-64; "Deerfield Doors," House Beautiful 6, no. 6 (November 1899): 243-52; "Cupboards and Their Kin," House Beautiful 8, no. 2 (July 1900): 459-63; "Arts and Crafts," House Beautiful 9, no. 2 (January 1902): 125-30; "Clay Paint and Other Wall Furnishings," House Beautiful 8, no. 6 (November 1902): 347-49; "Dutch Roofs," House Beautiful 14, no. 4 (November 1903): 333-35; "A Daughter of Madam Buffet," Handicraft 3, no. 8 (November 1910): 305-06; "Industries at Home in Kabylia," Handicraft 3, no. 8 (November 1910): 278-83; "A Merry Quest," Handicraft 4, no. 3 (June 1911): 81-85; "Two Samplers," Handicraft 4, no. 8 (November 1911): 285-89.

other objects that survive are, for the most part, unmarked simple buckles and pins. Compared to the more showy, delicate, and highly finished objects made by some other craftspeople of the era, the surviving examples of Madeline's work are not as visually compelling. Because most recent publications on the Arts and Crafts have been in the form of catalogues or coffee table books, Madeline's material absence from the collections available for illustration has led, understandably, to her brief representation or omission.

Evidence

Many excellent examples of marked objects produced in conjunction with the craft revival movement survive. These examples tempt researchers to focus on the objects for which the most information is easily available. As a result, the same examples are discussed and repeatedly illustrated in publications, or displayed in exhibitions of private and public collections. Few of the objects made by Madeline Yale Wynne survive, and most of those in one private collection. But the lack of objects for study and display should not impede her inclusion among the ranks of the craft revival's leaders.

Several hypotheses could account for Madeline's failure to mark her work. First, Madeline may have thought that a mark was not important. In the case of her work in Deerfield, she may have preferred to leave things unmarked as part of a collective work ideology. A second possibility is that Madeline did not consider her work worthy of a mark. Although Madeline's work was unanimously praised in exhibition reviews her letters reflect a high level of over-modesty as well as a certain

degree of low self-esteem.¹⁰ Perhaps objects do survive but cannot be identified as hers. Third, perhaps Madeline did have a consistent mark. People who own the objects may not have associated her with the mark and the objects have gone unattributed. Alternatively, owners or their descendants may not have valued the objects and simply threw them away.

Madeline was a vital member of the craft communities of Chicago and Deerfield. In contemporary reviews of craft shows in which she participated, Madeline's jewelry is the most celebrated. Her life and work can be described quite vividly through evidence gathered from other primary resources. She was greatly admired and her friendship was coveted within her social circle, prompting close friends to save her letters and even write memorial essays about her. Madeline's mother, Catherine Brooks Yale, was well known in her own right. A writer and social activist, she maintained a lively correspondence with several friends which, in the process of detailing her own life, describes Madeline's. The evidence available to reconstruct Madeline's life and work differs as circumstances in her life changed. The earlier part of her life, from her childhood until her marriage, is chronicled by letters from her mother and father to their friends George and Agnes Higginson Fuller. These letters reveal some of the daily activities and concerns of the Yale family. Letters from both Madeline and her mother, as well as local newspaper articles, document her thirteen-year marriage

¹⁰ This tendency and its possible causes are discussed below in the section entitled Background.

to Henry Winn¹¹ and her education and development as a painter. Some letters describe her career as a craftsperson, but articles about Madeline's work and by Madeline about her own and others' work provide more vivid accounts of that portion of her life. Many of these articles were accompanied by photographs of objects. One set of contemporary photographs of Madeline's work survives. The black-and-white images show a group of objects, mostly jewelry, representing Madeline's craftwork at the height of her career. Finally, obituaries, memorial essays, and Madeline's short stories and illustrations fill in some of the remaining details.

The body of evidence describing Madeline's life and work offers an opportunity to glimpse a late nineteenth-century artist's struggle between her interest in painting and her financial and public success as a craftsperson. Madeline's achievements and ambitions before her direct involvement in the craft revival raise questions about others involved in the "movement" and challenge normative interpretation of the Arts and Crafts movement. Was Madeline a member of a group of people learning and perfecting crafts in order to create an idealized society? Or might the theories and constructs laid out by the British founders of the "movement" have presented women like Madeline Yale Wynne, who had already broken free of the accepted societal boundaries, with the excuse they needed to persevere as craftspeople in a male- and industry-dominated society? Madeline's individual accomplishments and her overall contributions to the craft revival made her an important figure in her circle.

¹¹ Madeline changed the spelling of her last name shortly after she and Winn were divorced. The circumstances surrounding their marriage is explained below in the section entitled Background.

Her force of character and vitality were enduring factors according to her memorialists; the objects she made reflect those qualities.

Background

Madeline's background placed her in an ideal position to become an active contributor to the American Arts and Crafts movement. Her liberal upbringing encouraged literary and artistic interests which kept her in touch with international intellectual and artistic trends. Madeline was raised with a respect for nature's power and beauty. Her parents encouraged a physical and intellectual appreciation of the world around her. They permitted her to participate in strenuous outdoor activities¹² and they introduced her to the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, and Henry David Thoreau. Madeline's parents also nurtured her interest in art, particularly painting and crafts, especially metalwork.

An Artist's Upbringing

Madeline Yale was born on September 25, 1847, in Newport, New York, about 150 miles west of Schenectady in central upstate New York. She was the only daughter of Linus Yale, Jr., and Catherine Brooks Yale.¹³ Madeline and her two

¹² Annie C. Putnam, "Necrology: Madeline Yale Wynne" in History and Proceedings of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association 1912-1920 6, (Deerfield, MA: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 1921), 421; Catherine Brooks Yale to George Fuller, 15 January 1863, folder 8, box 12, Fuller-Higginson Family Papers, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library, Deerfield, Massachusetts (hereafter cited as Fuller-Higginson Papers).

¹³ Fuller, In Memory, 5-6.

brothers, John and Julian, were raised in a home headed by energetically intellectual parents who encouraged their children's creativity. Both of Madeline's parents came from well-established New England families. Linus Yale, Sr., Madeline's grandfather, was a descendant of the Yales of Yale University and the founder of the Yale Lock Company in Newport, New York. Madeline's father, Linus Yale, Jr., was born in Salisbury, Herkimer County, in central New York State on April 4, 1821.¹⁴ He was well educated and, although best known for his lock inventions, he had trained as an artist specializing in portrait painting before taking over his father's lock business.¹⁵ At some point before his marriage he moved to Philadelphia to "develop his aptitude for mechanics."¹⁶

Even regarding his locksmithing career, however, Linus' interests were more intellectual and artistic than managerial. He considered himself more a metalsmith than a businessman, and he maintained his artistic interests throughout his life. Madeline was deeply affected by her father's artistic inclinations and credited him with her metalsmithing education.¹⁷

¹⁴ Mrs. Walter E. Burnham, Mrs. Herbert P. Wall, Mrs. Elliot H. Taylor, Mr. Thomas W. Watkins, comps. History and Tradition of Shelburne, MA, (Springfield, MA: Pond-Ekberg Co., 1958), 202; The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography 9, (New York: James T. White Co., 1899), 188.

¹⁵ National Cyclopaedia, 188; Albert Allis Hopkins, The Lure of the Lock (New York: The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, 1928), 62-63; Dictionary of American Biography 20 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 591.

¹⁶ History and Tradition of Shelburne, MA, 202.

¹⁷ Questionnaire filled out by Madeline Yale Wynne for the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston, 10 September 1906. Archives of Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston, Boston Public Library. See also Putnam, "Necrology," 421.

Linus' earliest invention in 1851 or 1852 was the "Yale Infallible Bank Lock." This device had a changeable key which could be reassembled to alter the combination and it insured his reputation in the lock industry.¹⁸ He subsequently invented new forms of bank and other security locks, including the first dial or combination locks. Although he was quite successful as an inventor, he was not considered a very good businessman. He was a serious defender of his craft, but much preferred his extra-business pursuits. A letter from Linus to George Fuller, a family friend and locally known portrait artist, recounted an incident at an art gallery when an exhibiting painter mistook him for an artist:

He was quite social and chatty imagining I was perhaps an artist . . . until, one day, he asked what my branch was, meaning in art, and when I replied I was only a "locksmith" he suddenly had a pressing engagement in the next room--which was good enough for me for insulting both art & the anvil.¹⁹

Linus' lack of interest in his business, combined with a declining economy, produced some adverse effects. He concluded his letter to Fuller with complaints of financial woes:

We are suffering awfully with stagnation chronic. My business is for the present like Othello's occupation. So you see why I write so cheerfully! The nearer the grave financially the brighter my vision artistically--and yet to go out of business on the ebb tide I never could reach Heaven artistically.

¹⁸ Dictionary of American Biography, 592; Lure of the Lock, 62-63; Robyn Anne Hallowell, "The Yale Lock Company of Shelburne, Massachusetts, and the Development of the Factory System of Manufacture" (Historic Deerfield Summer Program paper, 1986): 18-19.

¹⁹ Linus Yale, Jr. to George Fuller, 3 March-1858, folder 8, box 12, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

By 1863, Linus' business situation had worsened considerably. In another letter to George Fuller he wrote:

I was at last compelled to look upon my task as utterly helpless and cease my ineffectual efforts. . . . I am employed by the concern at a stipulated salary which is so small I keep it drawn so it would not be worth looking after by anybody who might be looking around to find the pieces! . . . I have just enough pay to keep my family in food and wear the old clothes.²⁰

Art and leisure remained priorities, however, and Linus concluded the letter to his artist friend with assurances that the family "tr[ie]d to make up in conversation, reading and games what [they were] lacking in more necessary comforts" and a request that Fuller come to dinner and "eat a potato and talk art." It is difficult to say to what extent Linus was exaggerating in his description of his financial state of affairs, but one can conclude that he was worse off than he had been before.

Linus contributed heavily to Madeline's interest in art. The father and daughter shared a passion for drawing and painting. Evidence of Linus' artistic ability does not survive; however, he continued to draw in his free time after taking over his father's business²¹ and he remained an enthusiastic observer of the contemporary arts, making frequent trips to New York City art galleries. At least as a lock inventor, Linus showed talent and imagination. His inventions grew from an interest in metalwork itself as well as in the development of a lock that could not be picked. Madeline credited her father with supplying her with "training in mechanics and access to shop and machinery" through which she "thus naturally became interested in Arts and Crafts."²²

²⁰ L. Yale to G. Fuller, 4 February 1863, folder 8, box 12, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

²¹ L. Yale to G. Fuller, 3 March 1858, folder 8, box 12, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

²² Questionnaire for Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston, 10 September 1906.

Linus Yale, Jr., married Katherine Brooks in Tryon Falls, New York, on September 14, 1844. They lived in Philadelphia until 1855 when his father's death prompted his return to Newport, New York, to run the family lock business. In 1856, he moved the company to Philadelphia, and then back north to Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts, northwest of Springfield, in 1861.²³

Madeline's mother, Catherine,²⁴ was born in 1818, a member of "the New England Brooks" family, probably from Vermont.²⁵ She moved south to Philadelphia where she probably met Linus Yale, Jr. She is credited with having been active in the abolitionist cause there,²⁶ and she also worked as a teacher in Theodore Weld's progressive school in Eagleswood, New Jersey, before the Yales moved to Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts, in 1861. Madeline and her brothers attended Weld's school, which was considered "well abreast of the times." A strong advocate of co-education as well as a lobbyist for integrated physical, spiritual, and intellectual growth, Weld may well have influenced Catherine Brooks Yale's progressive philosophy. Catherine is reported to have been "a mellow and broad reformer, bringing to her work an

²³ National Cyclopaedia, 188; Linus Yale, Jr.'s friend, the farmer-turned-painter George Fuller was active in the New York City artistic community where Linus pursued an artistic career in the 1850s. Fuller, a native of Deerfield, MA, may well have suggested nearby Shelburne Falls to Linus as an ideal location for such an industry because of its position at the falls in the turn of a river.

²⁴ She would later change the spelling of her first name, both in her signature and in her published by-line, to "Catherine." I will refer to Catherine Brooks Yale simply as "Catherine."

²⁵ Fuller, In Memory, 6. I have been unable to clarify this vague reference. National Cyclopaedia, 188, states that Catherine Brooks Yale was the daughter of a Dr. John Brooks. History and Tradition, 202, identifies Catherine's father as Brooks Whitney.

²⁶ History and Tradition, 202.

unquenchable enthusiasm.” She was a “true lover of books, and like many another lover, often a jealous one, made unhappy, even aroused to anger, when some irreverent hand had placed a frivolous novel on her book-shelves, shoulder to shoulder with her Emerson, or the Bhagvat Geeta [sic]!”²⁷

Catherine was a writer as well. Annie Nott and Other Knots, a volume of short stories, was published under the pseudonym “Katinka” in 1856. These stories reflect Catherine’s strong opinions about women’s and civil rights. In 1887, under her own name, she published The Story of the Old Willard House of Deerfield, MA, an account of the history of the house she had recently bought in that village. Catherine produced a collection of stories for children, Nim and Cum and the Wonderhead Stories, in 1895, a few years before her death.²⁸

Given her parents’ backgrounds, Madeline was not predisposed to be a traditional nineteenth-century wife and mother, cut off from the preferred pastimes of her childhood. Madeline was an active child. In 1863, when Madeline was fifteen years old, her mother wrote to George Fuller that Madeline “walks eight miles a day and skates with the fleetest.”²⁹ Indeed, Madeline’s younger days seem to have been filled with hikes, picnics, landscape drawing excursions, family games, and talks about art.³⁰

²⁷ Putnam, “Necrology,” 421.

²⁸ Catherine B. Yale (pseud. Katinka), Annie Nott and Other Knots (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1856); Catherine B. Yale, The Story of the Old Willard House of Deerfield, MA (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1887); Catherine Brooks Yale, Nim and Cum and the Wonderhead Stories (n.p., 1895).

²⁹ Catherine Brooks Yale to G. Fuller, 15 January 15 1863, folder 8, box 12, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

³⁰ Putnam, “Necrology,” 421.

By the time she was sixteen, Madeline was painting in oils. References to works by Emerson and Whitman appear throughout the family's letters and the Yales may have known Emerson socially as well.³¹ This lifestyle implies that the family was not only fairly well-to-do, with the time for extensive leisure activities, but also connected with some of New England's leading artists and intellectuals. The family was quite close, and even after the children married, they spent many holidays together.

Henry Winn and Marriage

Like many other late nineteenth-century craftswomen, Madeline was drawn to her work both for financial reasons and for a creative outlet.³² Whether she was conscious of it or not, Madeline's craftwork offered her a chance to be a respected contributor to the artistic and literary circles of a male-dominated culture. Some women were able to pursue their talent in art and/or crafts within the constructs of Victorian society. They either stayed single, or they married men who were willing to permit their wives the time and effort it takes to learn, and perhaps excel. Madeline, it appears, was not so lucky. She was destined to try the traditional roles of wife and mother before realizing her goal of being an artist.

³¹ In their letters, both Madeline and Catherine refer to Ralph Waldo Emerson as though they knew him personally. Catherine's interest in transcendentalist thought, participation in progressive education, and inherited membership in New England's social and intellectual elite make this connection very likely. A quote from "Dr. Emerson" in the Henry Fuller's eulogistic essay (*In Memory*, 10) refers to Edward Waldo Emerson, Ralph Waldo Emerson's youngest child. The younger Emerson was a doctor, painter, and instructor at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and wrote the foreword to Madeline's An Ancestral Invasion and Other Stories.

³² Cynthia A. Brandimarte, "Somebody's Aunt and Nobody's Mother: The American China Painter and Her Work, 1870-1920," Winterthur Portfolio 23, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 203-24.

Madeline Yale married Major Henry Winn in Cooperstown, New York, on October 24, 1865.³³ How the couple met and why they married is unknown. Winn was born in 1838 in Whitingham, Vermont, just north of the Massachusetts border.³⁴ He was the son of Reuben Winn, a well-respected member of Whitingham society who was a state senator and postmaster.³⁵ Henry Winn was a graduate of Yale University, class of 1859, and studied law at Harvard University before going to work in Boston in the office of the attorney general. In 1861, Winn became assistant attorney general and then worked as the personal secretary to Senator George Sumner.³⁶ Joining Massachusetts' 52nd Volunteer Regiment as a major in August of 1862, Winn served in the army during the Civil War for one year, and was released from service on August 14, 1863.³⁷ Although he was an officer, he did not particularly distinguish himself in the eyes of the regiment's chronicler, J. F. Moors. Within Moors' book describing the regiment's activities during the Civil War, Winn is mentioned directly only in the listing of field and staff officers.³⁸

³³ Divorce record for Henry Winn v. Madeline Winn, Franklin County (MA) Supreme Judicial Court, vol. 10, 564-66, Supreme Judicial Court, Boston, Massachusetts.

³⁴ J. F. Moors, History of the Fifty-second Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers (Boston: George E. Ellis, 1893), iii.

³⁵ Malden Evening News, 25 January 1916; Clark Jillson, Green Leaves from Whitingham, Vermont (Worcester, MA: private press, 1894), 214.

³⁶ Malden Evening News, 25 January 1916.

³⁷ Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in the Civil War, vol. 4. (Norwood, MA: Norwood Press, 1932), 585.

³⁸ Moors, iii.

Because Winn received his army commission in Shelburne Falls, Madeline may have met him there some time between her family's arrival there in 1861 and his departure to fight in the war in 1862. Winn may have been working in Shelburne Falls shortly before he joined the army. He formed the Yale & Winn Manufacturing Company with Linus Yale and Madeline's elder brother, John, some time in the early 1860s. However, Winn does not appear on the Yale & Winn ledgers until January 5, 1865.³⁹ By then he was the bookkeeper for the company. What Winn did between his release from the army in 1863 and 1865 is uncertain. Madeline's mother first alluded to Winn in a letter to George Fuller in September, 1865, informing him that Madeline was to be married the next month. Catherine's passing mention of such an important event is unusual.⁴⁰

Perhaps Catherine had misgivings about the match. Her letters are usually filled with praise for her children's accomplishments and animated descriptions of friends' activities. Later, when her son John became engaged, Catherine mentioned the upcoming wedding and rejoiced in her son's happiness. Madeline's engagement was not mentioned until shortly before the wedding and, even then, Henry Winn's name was not included.

Little information survives describing the newly married couple's life between 1866 and 1868. By February 17, 1868, they were living in Elizabeth, New

³⁹ Account book, "Yale & Winn Manufacturing Company, 1856-1865," 65, no. 14950, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library, Deerfield, Massachusetts. The entry dated 5 January 1865 lists "H. Winn" as bookkeeper.

⁴⁰ C. Yale to G. Fuller, 29 September 1865, folder 8, box 12, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

Jersey.⁴¹ It was there that their first son, Philip Henry Winn, was born on January 17, 1868.⁴² By 1870, the Winns had moved to a boarding house in New York City and then to a house in Piermont, Rockland County, New York, on the west coast of the Hudson River north of the city. They stayed in Piermont until March, 1872.⁴³ Henry Winn and John Yale were probably still in some sort of business together and working primarily out of New York City.⁴⁴ According to the account in Winn's obituary notice, this business was fairly successful.⁴⁵

Madeline's ties to her parents remained strong after her marriage. When the elder Yales moved into a new house in Shelburne Falls in 1868, Catherine mentioned that Linus and Madeline were to share a studio (of unknown type, but probably for both painting and metalwork) behind the house. Unfortunately, Linus died on Christmas Eve, 1868, within a few months after the move. The studio may never have been set up.

Madeline spent her summers visiting her parents. While the fact that Madeline stayed very close to her family does not in itself point to trouble in the marriage, her reliance on her parents, especially her mother, for company may indicate

⁴¹ C. Yale to Agnes Higginson Fuller, 17 February 1868, box 25, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁴² "Philip Henry Wynne," Greenfield Gazette and Courier, 15 February 1919.

⁴³ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 3 March 1870 and 30 March 1870, box 25, Fuller-Higginson Papers; divorce record for Henry Winn v. Madeline Winn, Franklin County (MA) Supreme Judicial Court, vol. 10, 564-66.

⁴⁴ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 30 March 1870, box 25, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁴⁵ Malden Evening News, 25 January 1916.

that her home life with Henry Winn was not as fulfilling as the one with which she had grown up. Madeline may also have wished to bring her children and herself to the cooler and healthier surroundings of western Massachusetts to escape New York City's frequent summer epidemics.

After Linus' death, the Yale and Winn business either took a turn for the worse or ceased to exist. This may have been because John Yale became involved in handling business matters for his father's Shelburne Falls lock company. By March 3, 1870, Winn was attempting to start some sort of business in South America and Madeline was pregnant again.⁴⁶ Henry Winn made at least two trips to South America, both unsuccessful, and was out of the country on one of these trips when Madeline gave birth to their second son, Sidney Yale Winn, on September 6, 1870.⁴⁷ Catherine's letters to Agnes Fuller during this period hint at the growing strain caused by Winn's lack of business success and apparent selfishness. On March 3, 1870, she wrote:

I find [Madeline] in wretched spirits, with a prospect that none but a happy wife should have. She is pining for the country. Mr. Winn has realized nothing from all these grand South American schemes and in my opinion never will. The consequence is M. is in the condition of wardrobe in which I always find her, and as soon as I can go out I shall buy her some clothes, as we always have done.⁴⁸

In fact, Winn had lost his ship, the Carribean [sic] when, according to Winn's obituary notice, it "became wrecked by the breakage of the machinery which could not be insured."⁴⁹

⁴⁶ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 3 March 1870, box 25, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁴⁷ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 21 September 1870, box 25, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁴⁸ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 3 March 1870, box 25, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁴⁹ Malden Evening News, 25 January 1916.

Five months later, matters were much worse. By September 21, 1870, Catherine was supporting her daughter's family. She wrote:

Mr. Winn is not in any business--I do not know where [he and Madeline] will spend the winter but I think very likely they will stay here [in their house in Piermont, New York]. It is a remarkably healthy place and I do not know how M. could be more comfortable under the circumstances, unless she would go home with me, which I have rather urged. But perhaps I have yet to learn that wife and children can be supported without the usual toil and care--that smoking, reading, croquet and cards are as good a resource as the more common and vulgar forms of occupation. If the experiment is to be fairly tried I propose to withdraw my services for the future and draw my purse strings a little tighter, wouldn't you?⁵⁰

In the winter of 1870, Winn ventured "west" to look for business, but nothing came of his travels.⁵¹

During the next year, circumstances did not improve. In January, 1871, Catherine Yale was living with her son, John, in New York City, and Madeline was still with Winn in Piermont. Winn was still unemployed.⁵² In April, Catherine stated that "Madelene [sic] is not at all strong. She is always tired--Dear Child perhaps she will never rest in this life."⁵³ By the end of the year, Winn had decided to move back to Shelburne Falls. The Winns relocated to a small house there by mid-March of 1872,

⁵⁰ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 21 September 1870, box 25, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁵¹ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 4 November 1870, box 25, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁵² C. Yale to A. Fuller, 29 January 1871, box 25, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁵³ C. Yale to A. Fuller, April 1871, box 26, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

and Catherine followed them “home,” reopening the house she had left soon after the death of her husband three years earlier.⁵⁴

While Catherine Yale’s letters characterize Winn as a bad provider for his family, Madeline had not yet needed to work while she was married. By the time the Winns moved back to Shelburne Falls in 1872, however, their financial situation was relatively tight. Catherine described Madeline’s new house as a “modest little establishment” and extolled her ability to maintain a household on what she considered a small budget.⁵⁵

The Yale women’s return to Shelburne Falls marked a change in their daily activities. Catherine formed a women’s group called “The Neighbors” which devoted itself to improving local schools and embellishing the town’s streets. She also organized a group advocating women’s suffrage.

Perhaps due to the influence of George Fuller, who lived in nearby Deerfield, and perhaps because of its potential as a source of income, Madeline started painting again.⁵⁶ Still, she was not happy. Catherine’s letters to the Fullers include indications that Madeline was suffering from a sense of hopelessness and a lack of energy—classic symptoms of depression. Winn, according to Catherine, was not helping matters at all:

⁵⁴ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 26 December 1871 and 26 March 1872, box 26, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁵⁵ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 26 March 1872, box 26, Fuller-Higginson Papers. Catherine’s remarks cannot be quantified, the actual amount of Madeline’s budget was not mentioned.

⁵⁶ C. Yale to G. Fuller, 4 July 1872 and 19 November 1872, box 26, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

M. has had a sad winter, all Mr. Winn's most trying qualities having culminated in what I consider tyrannies and persecutions of an unendurable nature.⁵⁷

She went on to make disparaging remarks about marriage, the "holy" ordinance, and "bonds inviolate" [her quotes].

By May, 1874, Catherine was speaking in terms of "separation." Writing to George Fuller, she mentioned Madeline's "sad errand to Boston," saying that if it

leads to an immediate change in her life, I shall make everything conform to that, and if Freedom means energy to work, and hope to success, Madelene [sic] will apply herself to study and efforts at self-support. . . . I have apprehensions of much unkindness in the struggle, but I have no question as to the right and duty of separation.⁵⁸

Madeline probably did leave Winn that summer. The Greenfield Gazette's accounts of the Winns' activities imply that they led entirely separate lives after 1874. Madeline attended none of her husband's political functions and Winn was never listed among those present at the various community and social activities organized by Catherine Yale and her daughter. However, Winn did not take legal action until January of 1875, when he filed a claim that Madeline had deserted him.⁵⁹ Winn's claim was justified; Madeline had left him. Desertion was probably the only way she could free herself from her husband without having to file for a divorce herself and be subjected to

⁵⁷ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 25 January 1873, box 26, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁵⁸ C. Yale to G. Fuller, 27 May 1874, folder 8, box 12, Fuller-Higginson Papers. These remarks reveal a surprising attitude, even for a suffragist, but they parallel sentiments she had expressed as early as 1858 in the stories published in Annie Nott and Other Knots. Perhaps these strong sentiments explain, in part, why Catherine Yale used a pseudonym for that publication.

⁵⁹ Divorce record for Henry Winn v. Madeline Winn, Franklin County (MA) Supreme Judicial Court, vol. 10, 564-66.

public questioning about private matters. The fact that Madeline was the daughter of Linus Yale, Jr., only heightened the probability of unwanted publicity. Although he remained in Shelburne Falls, was elected state senator, and established a law practice,⁶⁰ Winn disappears from Madeline's and her mother's letters from that point on. Three years later, in 1878, Madeline defaulted on the warrant summoning her to appear in court, permitting Winn to win his suit for divorce without enduring the hearing process. Madeline never remarried. Henry Winn married Eva Merrill in Boston, in 1880.⁶¹

Although she was taking steps toward what she would later call her "freedom"⁶² Madeline was not in good spirits during this period. Letters from Madeline to her friend Isadore Pratt⁶³ during the summer and fall of 1874 indicate that she was extremely unhappy and despondent.

Idleness is all I have done--for months. I am sated with idleness. I am in a trance of inertia. I do not know how to begin to work--I am bitter in spirit because I hate myself and my incompetence. I am in daily admiration of my kitchen maid because she knows what she can do and does it--some morning instead of giving her orders for the day I shall kneel and say 'Thou art the mistress' and beg that she who can daily say

⁶⁰ Greenfield Gazette and Courier, 22 October 1877; 18 February 1878; and 15 March 1880.

⁶¹ Malden Evening News, 25 January 1916. Henry Winn's obituary, not surprisingly, does not mention his first marriage. It does, however, mention that Winn's son, Philip, survived him.

⁶² Madeline Yale Wynne to Isadore Pratt Taylor, 19 May 1878, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Family Papers, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, Massachusetts (hereafter cited as Taylor Papers).

⁶³ Isadore was the daughter of Josiah Pratt of Shelburne Falls, MA (Greenfield Gazette and Courier, 30 May 1881), Madeline's son Philip's former teacher (C. Yale to A. Fuller, 23 January 1873, box 26, Fuller-Higginson Papers), and, later, one of Madeline's metalworking students (M. R. Twose, "The Chicago Arts and Crafts Society's Exhibition," Brush and Pencil 2 (May 1898): 77).

'I am working or doing all I am capable of doing' may rule me, who am the most miserable idler. . . . News I have none--I do not know anything that goes on.⁶⁴

A note written later in Isadore's hand on the blank side of the last sheet of this letter states that "it was deep trouble and disappointment this dear soul was in--in these years."

Madeline's dissatisfaction with her married life did not lessen her devotion to her sons. Torn between spending time with them and pursuing her continuing interest in drawing and painting, however, she was unhappy in her attempts to act the part of the traditional mother. Judging from her letters to Isadore, Madeline's apparent lack of time to draw and paint appears to have been caused solely by the demands of her children:

I do not see how I am ever to do much while the children are small. I cannot neglect them utterly, and there is not enough of me to divide.⁶⁵

This winter has been my period of rest, not to say stagnation, I am grieved to have this so. But little cares and demands are devouring my time and me. Heaven help me, my boys take much of my time. They must be clothed and watched physically and mentally, and the days fly so fast that except for any gray hairs I should think the years were but weeks.⁶⁶

Despite her complaints of inactivity, Madeline was still painting. In August, 1874, Madeline sent a lily painting to her brother Julian, then working in Chicago, with hopes that he could find a buyer. This attempt at earning income from her art work proved ineffective, apparently, because she sent Julian a painting on glass in January, 1876, "to

⁶⁴ M. Wynne to Isadore Pratt, 30 August 1874, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ M. Wynne to I. Pratt, 18 February 1877, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

keep her lily company.”⁶⁷ The lily painting was probably Madeline’s first professional painting.

Although she continued painting and drawing at home, Madeline does not appear to have taken any art classes while living with Henry Winn. Perhaps Winn had not permitted her to study art, or perhaps Madeline had not felt free to do so. After Madeline left her husband, however, she traveled frequently to art courses in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, fulfilling her mother’s hope that she would “apply herself to study and efforts at self-support.” Her desertion apparently gave Madeline the freedom she needed to pursue her artistic interests.

The Development of an Artist

In May, 1877, Madeline attended classes at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia.⁶⁸ That fall she began studies at the school of Boston’s Museum of Fine Art. In Boston for almost a year, Madeline worked very hard, studying from still-life and casts, as well as working with models and learning anatomy. In addition to her studies, she completed at least three commissions for crayon drawings. During this time she lived with her son Sidney, then seven years old, in a garret in West Medford, Massachusetts, just outside of Boston.⁶⁹ In May, 1878, after

⁶⁷ M. Wynne to I. Pratt, 30 January 1876, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

⁶⁸ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 10 May 1877, box 26, Fuller-Higginson Papers. Thomas Eakins had been hired at the Academy a year earlier, and the institution was in the middle of a controversy over women’s art education and whether male and female students should be taught together in anatomy classes and those using live nude models. See Christine Jones Huber, The Pennsylvania Academy and Its Women, 1850-1920 (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 1974), 21-24. In her letters, Madeline does not indicate which classes she took at the Academy.

⁶⁹ M. Wynne to I. Taylor, 13 January 1878, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

the divorce was granted, Madeline's artistic output increased dramatically. In a letter to Isadore, Madeline spoke of her "freedom" and the probability that she would get to keep the children:

You know of my freedom, of my having the children--be glad with me-- I am not assured the keeping of the children, but I think when I look evenly at the future that the chances are in favor of Mr. Winn's being so interested in himself that he will let them alone--I hope and pray so.⁷⁰

This letter reflects Madeline's position as a woman at a distinct disadvantage. By cutting herself off from her husband, she was severing all ties to a traditional and socially acceptable lifestyle. Mr. Winn's self-interestedness and his own wish to distance himself from Madeline were probably the only hopes she had of retaining custody of her children. Madeline's extreme language indicates the extent to which her relationship with her husband had deteriorated. Still, the facts surrounding their initial attraction and ultimate disillusionment remain a mystery. Over a year before her divorce, Madeline reacted to the news that her friend Isadore was to be married in words which reflect a bitterness toward marriage in general. Madeline's warning to her friend foreshadowed the end of her own marriage:

And now you are to set sail on that new old ship called Love--for those dream lands, full of fair flowers and sweet--but the matrimonial sea is a treacherous deep--and many ships sail that never reach the enchanted land, and on your voyage you will pass many sad wrecks of noble ships --see many forlorn and drooping sails--and some piratical craft with unholy cargo.⁷¹

⁷⁰ M. Wynne to I. Taylor, 19 May 1878, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

⁷¹ M. Wynne to I. Taylor, 18 February 1877, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

Madeline's "freedom" did not bring contentment, but it did allow her the time to work on her artistic projects. She mentioned making a four-foot panel painted with apple blossoms and painting flower pieces of anemones and blue violets for a "man of musical taste."⁷² In July, 1878, she was "happy enough to have orders enough to spur [her] up so that [she would] not drift too much."⁷³ These commissions did not earn enough for Madeline to support herself entirely, but her mother said that they were "a medium for books, trousers, and school books not to be despised."⁷⁴

By Christmas, 1878, Madeline had expanded her artistic output to include china painting as well as crayon drawings and she was teaching children's art classes at a school in nearby Greenfield.⁷⁵ The onslaught of Christmas commissions marks the beginning of Madeline's professional craft career. While she continued to paint through the 1890s, her devotion to craft projects gradually overtook the time she spent on painting. Her drawing and painting on canvas became a pastime, while her crafts provided her with an income.

While Ruskin, Morris, and others urged artists to be proud of their work, Madeline struggled with the unease of producing work she said she hated. She had commissions for painted china and screens for Christmas, 1879, but her work did not satisfy her. In a letter to Isadore, she complained:

⁷² M. Wynne to I. Taylor, 19 May 1878, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

⁷³ M. Wynne to I. Taylor, 27 July 1878, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

⁷⁴ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 14 October 1878, box 26, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁷⁵ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 8 December 1878, box 26, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

I have aspirations, I do not think I have ambitions--but art is the one thing before which I stand humble & simple as a child--I am content with the second best of all else--and so you see you feel why I am so miserable over myself & my works. . . . I hate pretty work. Did you tell me that Hammerton [sic] says or did I read it--that "only the pretty in art is unendurable" and I paint pretty china, & pretty screens sometimes, and then the local correspondent says Mrs. Senator Winn is supposed (or considered) to have talent for art--may the Lord forgive him for the two insults.⁷⁶

At the very least, this statement shows Madeline's conflict between producing art that she considered to be worthy and making craft objects which would sell quickly. Her declaration that she hated "pretty work" may reflect Pugin's and Ruskin's rejection of ornament for ornament's sake,⁷⁷ as well as acknowledge Hamerton's statement. In painting china and screens, Madeline was contributing her efforts to that of the growing number of women producing such craftwork in the late nineteenth century.⁷⁸

However, Madeline's dissatisfaction with her work may reveal her impetus to move on to other media and find her own niche within the crafts community. As early as 1878, Madeline wrote to Isadore from West Medford during her art studies in Boston:

I [am] potting a little but am awfully sick of the literal cartloads that I see in the windows--nothing undecorated from Seltzer bottles to drain pipes.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ M. Wynne to I. Taylor, 4 January 1880, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers. Madeline probably refers to George Philip Hamerton, a British painter and writer active in the mid- to late nineteenth century and a friend of Ruskin. For more on Hamerton, see George C. Williamson, ed., Bryan's Dictionary of Painters and Engravers, vol. 3 (London: George Bell and Sons, 1910), 10-11.

⁷⁷ Naylor, 14 and 28.

⁷⁸ Brandimarte, 203-204.

⁷⁹ M. Wynne to I. Taylor, 13 January 1878, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

Another motivation to try a different, and perhaps more bold or original, direction was the allusion to Henry Winn, who was by then deep into western Massachusetts politics. Madeline's indication that the correspondent's association between her and her ex-husband was an insult implies that she was working to separate herself from him as thoroughly as possible. She was still, two years later, bitter about Winn and resented society's tendency to see a woman's accomplishments only in relation to her husband's, or in this case ex-husband's, position. By entrenching herself in a new group of art-minded people, and by producing work that was worthy of praise without mention of Winn, Madeline could forge herself a new social life.

While Madeline was declaring her independence, she was caught in a web of social expectations and linguistic patterns common to most women artists of the era. As women were being extolled as accomplished craftspeople, and even artists, their own expectations of how good their work could be continued to be quite low.⁸⁰ Madeline's frustration with her "pretty work" is a good example of the trap women like her fell into, producing the work that was expected of them. Even Madeline's paintings fall easily into the assumed category of women's work--flower paintings, painted panels, and studies of children rather than history and landscape paintings.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Huber, 24-27.

⁸¹ Maribeth Bernardy asserts in "Crafting a Life: A Biography of Madeline Yale Wynne" (Historic Deerfield Summer Program Paper, 1989) that Madeline boldly rejected the traditional roles offered to women during the late nineteenth century. While Madeline's divorce and choice to pursue an artistic and intellectual lifestyle did separate her from the larger population of American women of her era, she accepted traditional alternatives to the more widely accepted roles of wife and mother by living with her mother and focusing on women's painting subjects and crafts.

The other common struggle among aspiring women artists was in defining their place in the artistic social hierarchy. The distinction between “amateur,” “artist,” and “professional” china painters was very hard to make. Some amateurs charged for their work, some professionals were not formally trained, and relative artistic ability clouded up the remaining variables.⁸²

Madeline’s work, too, cannot easily be defined as either “amateur” or “professional,” perhaps because she never entirely centered on one medium. Madeline worked diligently on her painting and drawing, struggling to maintain a balance between her commissions and her continuing art education. She still aspired to be a painter and had not yet devoted herself to crafts above painting. Catherine thought that Madeline was wasting herself on china, and boasted to her friend Agnes Higginson Fuller that just before Christmas Madeline had sold five painted panels for \$200.00.⁸³ None of Madeline’s painted works survive, but she must have been considered talented because her painted panels garnered a good price.

Despite her commission obligations, Madeline concentrated on drawing studies throughout the first half of 1880, when she and Isadore exchanged charcoal sketches and critiques of each other’s work through the mail. She also attended classes at the Art Students’ League in New York City during March and April.⁸⁴

⁸² Brandimarte, 204-09.

⁸³ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 6 January 1880, box 27, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁸⁴ M. Wynne to I. Taylor, 11 April 1880 and 18 May 1880, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

Madeline's career as an ardent artist began after her separation from Winn. Her professional career was spurred on both by her increasing need to earn money to support her two growing sons and to pay for her expanding art studies. As she committed greater hours to producing art work, she spent even less time than before caring for her two sons. It appears that by 1880 much of the job of raising her sons had fallen to her mother. Madeline acknowledged the debt she owed her mother at the close of a letter to Isadore, saying:

I wonder how much it is right for me to do in art when I must throw burdens on mother in order to do anything. I console myself hoping that in time I may repay her richly & that as I must have some means of support I am right in getting all the education I can now even if I must cast off some duties on her dear broad shoulders and heart.⁸⁵

Madeline was willing to entrust her sons' upbringing to her mother. Her concern was for her own education and success and she does not appear to have worried about the effect her absence might have had on her sons. Indeed, they are rarely mentioned in her correspondence.

In the fall of 1880, Madeline went on a tour of Europe which lasted at least five months. She traveled with her friend from Shelburne Falls, Annie Dixwell, and possibly others, visiting friends along the way. Catherine's accounts of the trip concentrate more on Madeline's activities than on the people she was with. Madeline went to Athens, Florence, Madrid, Paris, Venice, and Vienna. She focused on studying European painting, as well as taking in the sights. When in Paris, Madeline met the French painter Thomas Couture, declaring his work "the best of all modern French art,"

⁸⁵ M. Wynne to I. Taylor, 4 January 1880, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

and in Spain, she copied a Velasquez portrait.⁸⁶ She met the American portrait and genre painter Frank Duveneck and his students in Florence and spent some time with them. She found in his work a “certain strength and simplicity, but [his work] did not satisfy her ideally.”⁸⁷ She sketched the Acropolis in Athens, and was invited, but could not attend, to dine with Heinrich Schliemann, the noted German archaeologist, then working on various excavations of classical sites.⁸⁸

Madeline also met Annie Cabot Putnam during her stay in Florence. Annie, a painter and craftsperson in her own right, was three years younger than Madeline and came from the well-established Cabot and Putnam families of Boston. Soon after they met, Annie and Madeline developed a life-long friendship, working, traveling, and eventually living together.⁸⁹

After her return to Shelburne Falls, Madeline gave talks on her travels to her mother’s community group, “Our Neighbors.”⁹⁰ Although she insisted that she did not have a good sense of art history, she gave talks on “art” to local groups in order to raise money for casts for a local school’s art classes, probably her own classes in Greenfield.⁹¹ Madeline continued painting, sending a study for a child’s head to

⁸⁶ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 30 November 1880, box 27, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁸⁷ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 28 March 1881, box 27, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Mary W. Fuller, “Annie Cabot Putnam” in History and Proceedings of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association 1921-1929 (Deerfield, MA: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 1929): 321.

⁹⁰ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 8 July 1881, box 27, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁹¹ M. Wynne to I. Taylor, 10 November 1881, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

Cleveland for sale, hoping it would fetch \$20.00.⁹² Her craft output increased steadily. She completed “some little decorative orders” and sold “some banners on satin to Chicago” in the winter of 1881-82.⁹³

Still, Madeline felt that she was “only a groper.”⁹⁴ She had yet to find the niche in which she felt most satisfied. She painted throughout 1882, declaring that she was “batling with color this winter,”⁹⁵ and her mother wrote to Agnes Fuller in May of that year that

[Madeline] gets time to study a little and makes interesting sallies into that endless region of experiment and trial that delight and baffle this art lover and student, but gains something I think in every study.⁹⁶

Madeline’s trip to Europe, like her divorce, marked a turning point in her artistic career. As a well-traveled student of art she offered to pass her knowledge and skills on to others in the form of drawing classes and lectures. She continued to lecture on art and related subjects for the rest of her life. After her European tour, Madeline’s craft production took a new turn. She began working seriously in metals, reviving the skills her father had taught her and letting loose the imagination for which she was to become so well-known.

⁹² Ibid. A friend or one of Madeline’s brothers may have been working in Cleveland at that time.

⁹³ M. Wynne to I. Taylor, 15 January 1882, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ M. Wynne to I. Taylor, 8 February 1882, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

⁹⁶ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 13 May 1882, box 27, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

The Craftsperson and Her Circle

It is difficult to say when Madeline finally discovered her penchant for metalwork. Perhaps she had been dabbling in it since her father taught her the techniques of his trade when she was young. Neither she nor her mother mentions Madeline doing any kind of metalwork until June, 1883, when Catherine's reference to Madeline's arrival "with all her sparkles, and activities and brass [her emphasis]" implies a distinctly positive endeavor.⁹⁷

Madeline's career as a serious metalworker began during the summer and fall of 1883 when she started working with acids on brass and copper. Agnes Fuller, whose diaries usually contain only brief notes about the day's events, remarked one day in July that Madeline was interested in copper.⁹⁸ Later she relayed to Catherine George Fuller's compliments on Madeline's brasswork.⁹⁹ Annie Putnam's influence may also have focused Madeline's attention on metalwork. Annie and Madeline shared a studio from 1883 on, and Annie lived with Madeline and her mother after the Yale women moved to Deerfield in 1885.¹⁰⁰

Shelburne Falls no longer had anything to offer Madeline and Catherine. The men of the family were no longer there: Linus Yale had died, Henry Winn had left

⁹⁷ C. Yale to I. Taylor, 21 June 1883, folder 8, box 12, Taylor Papers.

⁹⁸ A. Fuller diary entry, 13 July 1883, box 19, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

⁹⁹ C. Yale to A. Fuller, 23 November 1883, box 27, Fuller-Higginson Papers.

¹⁰⁰ Greenfield Gazette and Courier, 26 October 1885.

the family, both of Madeline's brothers had moved west to cities, and Madeline's sons were away in school. Agnes Fuller, too, had lost her husband. George Fuller's death in 1884 may have spurred the women's move to Deerfield, adding the incentive of providing support for their widowed friend.

Madeline and her mother left Shelburne Falls, a town centered around industry, and entered Deerfield, a town dominated by an artistic and farming community. While their sons and husbands had largely controlled their lives in Shelburne Falls, the Yale women made their new home in a town which boasted about its strong-minded and independent women. A joke circulated through Deerfield in those days about the ladies of a neighboring town "who were stylish and loved pretty hats, but the ladies of Deerfield cared more for what was under the hats."¹⁰¹

At the time Madeline shifted her creative focus to metalwork she decided to change the spelling of her last name. During the summer of 1883, Madeline chose to revert to the "historic spelling of the family name," turning "Winn" into "Wynne."¹⁰² Although the alteration was slight, it indicated a closer alliance with the medieval yearnings of other craft revivalists. Gustav Stickley used the phrase "Als ik kan" in his maker's marks. This phrase, meaning "if I can," derived from the fifteenth-century Flemish painter Jan Van Eyck and evoked a time of guild-dominated craft production so admired by craft revivalists. The French phrase of the same meaning, "Si je puis," was used by William Morris.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Margery Burnham Howe, Deerfield Embroidery (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), 12.

¹⁰² "Philip Henry Wynne," Greenfield Gazette and Courier, 15 February 1919.

¹⁰³ Lionel Lambourne, Utopian Craftsmen (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, Inc,

Madeline's name change served a personal purpose as well. It marked another break from her past life with Henry Winn. By assuming a slightly new identity, Madeline could remain "Mrs. Wynne" without linking herself with her ex-husband. Those who met her later in her life could easily assume that she was a widow.¹⁰⁴ While she did not legally register the change, Madeline was firm about its use, as evidenced in a note on a valuation list for Deerfield in 1894. In the entry "Winn" was crossed out and replaced with "Wynne." A note in the margin stated that the name "should be so written in the future."¹⁰⁵

Evidence

The Yale women's letters show that between 1883 and 1885 Madeline stayed busy teaching, painting, and doing craft work. She traveled frequently with Annie Putnam on painting trips along the East Coast and to the Adirondacks. On occasion they visited friends and relatives.

Agnes Higginson Fuller's active written correspondence with the women came to an end in 1885 because they all lived in the same town from then on and probably visited each other regularly, making lengthy letters unnecessary. Madeline and Catherine maintained their correspondence with Isadore Pratt Taylor, but the letters were far less frequent in the 1880s and 1890s and contained little information about the

1980), 152; Tod M. Volpe and Beth Cathers, Treasures of the American Arts and Crafts Movement, 1890-1920 (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988), 9.

¹⁰⁴ This assumption has been erroneously repeated in more recent publications, such as Sharon Darling's Chicago Furniture: Art, Craft, and Industry 1833-1993 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1984), despite the citation of Madeline's divorce in her obituary in the Greenfield Gazette and Courier, 5 January 1918.

¹⁰⁵ Deerfield Valuation List, 1894, 75, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.

women's thoughts. This, too, is probably because the women were visiting each other more often. Madeline's brother, Julian, moved to Chicago some time around 1890, and was likely to have seen the Taylors socially.¹⁰⁶ Madeline and her mother visited Julian regularly and probably saw Isadore as well, thus reducing the need to relate important events through the mail. In 1893, the Yale women moved to Chicago, spending most of the year there and summers in Deerfield.

Documentation of the last three decades of Madeline's life relies on the accounts of her activities as listed in publications by the organizations with which she was associated. The Deerfield Industries issued descriptive listings of the objects on display in their summer exhibitions. Articles by Madeline or by others discussing her work sometimes offer glimpses of her activities and opinions. Memorial essays provide general descriptions of her character, but such reminiscences are justifiably positive, and lack the immediacy and day-to-day detail of letters and diaries. The decrease in known surviving correspondence is fortunately balanced by Madeline's increasing prominence within Deerfield and Chicago society.

Deerfield and Chicago

The three women arrived in Deerfield at an ideal time, both for them and for the town. Catherine bought the old Willard House, also known as "The Manse," just as Deerfield was embarking on a town-wide restoration project, headed by the town's self-appointed historian George Sheldon. Catherine's renovation of her new home, as well

¹⁰⁶ Julian may have been in the railroad supply business as early as the 1890s. He owned his own railroad supply company, Julian L. Yale & Company, by 1905. Business Directory of the City of Chicago 1905 (The Lakeside Annual, Chicago: The Chicago Directory Company, 1905).

as her timely publication of The Story of the Old Willard House of Deerfield, MA, in 1887,¹⁰⁷ helped settle the outsiders into the small community.

The women did not arrive as strangers, and, through Agnes Fuller and the families' friendship, even had connections to one of the town's most celebrated citizens, George Fuller.

Madeline's diverse artistic interests fit easily into Deerfield's expanding artistic activities. Between 1885 and 1900 the town changed from a place with scattered individual artists to the home of an artists' community hosting well publicized annual exhibitions. In 1896, Margaret Whiting and Ellen Miller organized the town's first official craft production group, the Society of Needlework. Over the next three years, the village's handcraft industries expanded to include basketry and metalwork, and Madeline participated in the first annual exhibit and sale of Deerfield work in 1899.¹⁰⁸ She is credited with starting the town's raffia basket-making group in which she taught local women techniques she had learned while making hats as a child.¹⁰⁹ The group met at the Manse, conveniently located on the town's main road and close to the Common and crossroads. She became the first president of the Deerfield Industries in

¹⁰⁷ This essay was accompanied by Madeline's pen and ink drawings of interior and exterior views of the house.

¹⁰⁸ Emma Lewis Coleman, A Historic and Present Day Guide to Old Deerfield (Boston: The Plimpton Press, 1907), 98.

¹⁰⁹ Gertrude Porter Ashley and Mildred Porter Ashley, Raffia Basketry as a Fine Art (Deerfield, MA: by the authors, 1915): preface; Sylvester Baxter, "The Movement for Village Industries," Handicraft 1, no. 7 (October 1902): 149; Mabel T. Priestman, "History of the Arts and Crafts Movement in America, Part Two," House Beautiful 20, no. 6 (November 1906): 14.

1901 and held that position until her death in 1918. Madeline and Annie Putnam also held the distinction of being the Deerfield Industries' only exhibiting jewelers.¹¹⁰

Although the Deerfield shows included paintings, they exhibited largely, if not entirely, work by men. Madeline did not formally exhibit her paintings on these occasions. However, her painting studio may have been open to visitors during the summer months.

Madeline was similarly involved in Chicago's growing crafts community. Like other major cities at the end of the nineteenth century, Chicago was a center for social progressivism. Hull House, a settlement house founded in 1889 by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr for immigrant families, functioned as a cultural center of sorts, offering craft classes as well as lectures on history, art history, and literature. These activities were intended to fulfill Ruskin's social reform goals of combining art and labor in workers' lives, thereby working toward a "future which shall make common the privilege now exclusive of doing the work one loves to do and expressing one's self through it, which, as Morris so often said, is art."¹¹¹

Madeline became involved with Hull House as early as 1897, when she participated in the annual Spring Art Exhibit which that year for the first time included "a small arts and crafts exhibit, designed to illustrate the difference between the machine manufactured, commercial articles and things which are made by the hand and bear the mark of interest and pleasure in the maker."¹¹² The Hull House exhibitions served as

¹¹⁰ Coleman, A Historic and Present Day Guide, 101.

¹¹¹ Ellen Gates Starr, "The Renaissance of Handicraft," International Socialist Review 2 (February 1902): 574.

¹¹² Hull House Bulletin 2, no. 4 (1 April 1897): 1.

the catalyst for the formation of the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society in the fall of 1897. Madeline served on the executive board and entered her work in the society's annual shows.¹¹³

Madeline shared a studio with her brother Julian in their home at 9 Ritchie Place. Julian occasionally exhibited his silverwork along with Madeline's, but never pursued the craft as more than a serious hobby.¹¹⁴ From 1896 through 1909, Madeline also kept a studio downtown in Chicago's Tree Building, where she made metal, leather, and embroidered objects and painted. The Tree Building also housed many other crafts studios.¹¹⁵

The Arts and Crafts Connection

Madeline's activities in Deerfield and Chicago were by no means separate from each other. She was one of many people linking centers of craft activity and/or social reform through their own travel. Madeline was also involved in a network of people exchanging objects and ideas through conversation, correspondence, publications, and exhibitions.

As early as 1890, Madeline had strong ties to Chicago. A photograph by Emma Coleman of Deerfield (fig. 1) depicts Madeline dressed in colonial costume at a

¹¹³ For further information on the formation and goals of the Chicago society, see Hull House Bulletin 2, no. 5 (June 1897): 4 and Hull House Bulletin 2, no. 8 (December 1897): 9.

¹¹⁴ Putnam, "Necrology," 423; Harriet Monroe, "An Experiment in Jewelry," House Beautiful 8, no. 2 (July 1900): 449-50; Mary Adams, "The Chicago Arts and Crafts Society," House Beautiful 9, no. 2 (January 1901): 98.

¹¹⁵ Sharon S. Darling, Chicago Metalsmiths (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1977), 62.

ball held in Deerfield to celebrate the renovation of Frary House. She is dancing with Henry Fuller, a Chicago journalist who would later write one of the memorial essays about Madeline. Living and working in Chicago, Madeline's brother Julian provided Madeline and her mother with a further link between the two communities.

Madeline spoke about silverwork and other craft traditions on a national lecture circuit which took her to such cities as Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis, and St. Louis. In the spring of 1898, at Chicago's Hull House, she gave a "charming paper on 'silverwork'" and read an original poem on the silversmith.¹¹⁶

Major exhibitions linked the craft communities as well. In 1898, one year before Deerfield craftspeople held their first annual exhibition, the Minneapolis Society of Arts and Crafts included "Deerfield handwrought jewelry" in its first exhibition.¹¹⁷

Madeline was an active member of the National League of Handicraft Societies and held elected office on its board for at least one year.¹¹⁸ Founded in 1907, the League provided a formal means of intercommunication for craft societies throughout the nation as well as a way to standardize the principles by which the various groups operated as self-proclaimed members of the Arts and Crafts movement. The League published the magazine Handicraft and arranged lecture series, conferences, and traveling exhibitions.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Hull House Bulletin 3, no. 4/5 (April/May 1898): 5.

¹¹⁷ Handicraft 3, no. 9 (December 1910): 339. Although the article does not mention the name of the Deerfield jeweler, the work submitted for this exhibition must have been by Madeline, or less probably Annie Putnam, since they were the only two jewelers on record there at that time.

¹¹⁸ Handicraft 3, no. 9 (December 1910): 322.

¹¹⁹ "A Brief Account of the National League of Handicraft Societies," Handicraft 3, no.

In 1910, Ellen Gates Starr of Chicago's Hull House sent "fine bindings" to be exhibited in Deerfield's "Village Room" alongside Madeline's metalwork, jewelry, and enamels.¹²⁰

Craft publications added to the spread of craft revival ideals. Both Handicraft, published in Boston, and House Beautiful, published in Chicago, were distributed nationally. Madeline regularly wrote articles for the two magazines, both of which took special pains to note her absence from major exhibitions, a distinction awarded none of her jewelry-making contemporaries. When Madeline did not contribute to the Chicago Art Institute's winter show of 1903-4, the subsequent House Beautiful review lamented her absence: ". . . we miss the marvelous red golds and green golds and coppery golds found in the jewels of Mrs. Wynne."¹²¹ An article in Handicraft noted that Madeline and Annie Putnam would not be exhibiting at Deerfield in 1910 because they were traveling in Europe.¹²²

The End of a Career

After 1910, evidence of Madeline's craftwork production for display and sale drops off. Her health started to fail, and after about 1912 she spent most winters in Tryon, North Carolina. In letters to Isadore Pratt Taylor, Madeline indicates that her involvement in Arts and Crafts societies had lessened. By 1914, she was not spending

¹ (April 1910): 22-23.

¹²⁰ "Gossip About Art and Artists," House Beautiful 8, no. 1 (December 1910): 48.

¹²¹ Elizabeth Emery, "Arts and Crafts--Some Recent Work," House Beautiful 15, no. 3 (February 1904): 132-33.

¹²² Handicraft 3, no. 4, (July 1910): 147.

much time at all in Chicago and during a visit found it “no longer like a home.”¹²³ She and Annie Cabot Putnam continued to spend summers in Deerfield at least until 1916, when Madeline sold the studio.¹²⁴ Despite this withdrawal from active craft production, Madeline did not drop out of creative circles altogether, giving lectures, and writing short stories and poetry until her death at the age of seventy in Asheville, North Carolina, in January of 1918.¹²⁵

That year proved a fateful one for the Arts and Crafts movement. World War I and the new focus on technology and mass production that accompanied it had created direct challenges to Arts and Crafts philosophy. Patrons of the craft revival were distracted by the immediate political and philosophical concerns of a war as well as the accompanying financial diversions. Madeline’s death came at an historically convenient time for her, because the status and feasibility of her livelihood was fast decreasing.¹²⁶

The Artist at Work

While Madeline did not publish articles about her own technique, her writing about others’ sometimes reveals a glimpse of the artist at work, if not at the objects she made. In a review in House Beautiful of Henry Wilson’s Silverwork and Jewelry, Madeline wrote:

¹²³ M. Wynne to I. Taylor, 13 January 1914, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

¹²⁴ M. Wynne to I. Taylor, 13 March 1916, folder 10, box 1, Taylor Papers.

¹²⁵ “Madeline Yale Wynne,” Greenfield Gazette and Courier, 5 January 1918.

¹²⁶ Volpe and Cathers, 24.

some are born soldering, some attain soldering, and some have soldering thrust upon them. Just try it, some day, and if you succeed, try it again, the time will surely come when the total depravity of inanimate things (especially solder) becomes a part of your belief.¹²⁷

In the same review Madeline praised Wilson for positing preferences for techniques which adhered to the basic tenets of the craft revival:

The glittering facet-cut stone, in its exasperating hardness, is properly condemned in favor of the cabochon cut. . . . [Wilson emphasizes] individuality without eccentricity, he writes for the workman, not the machine man.¹²⁸

Such statements flesh out the picture of the artist, but leave a crucial category of evidence about her work severely underrepresented--objects. Madeline's craftwork has almost completely disappeared. A few objects do survive: a silver watch fob with quartz (fig. 2); brass and copper buckles and buttons (fig. 3), sometimes enameled; rings with simple cabochon-cut stones; two etched bowls with floral designs (fig. 4, foreground); a small repoussé and enameled bowl; and a silver spoon (fig. 5). These objects represent only a fraction of her metalworking output. The Deerfield Industries exhibition pamphlets include listings of Madeline's contributions, mostly jewelry. Descriptions such as "The Little Puritan; intaglio in toned silver"¹²⁹ and

¹²⁷ Madeline Yale Wynne, "A Review of H. Wilson's Silverwork and Jewelry," House Beautiful 13, no. 6 (May 1903): 429.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Catalogue of Exhibition--Jewellery, Blue and White Embroidery, Pictures (Old Deerfield, MA: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 1907).

“Amethyst necklace, wistaria [sic] motive”¹³⁰ have not yet been matched with an object or photograph of an object. A few, however, may describe objects shown in a series of photographs taken by Frances and Mary Allen of Deerfield. The Allen sisters took at least 36 photographs of Madeline’s work some time between 1900 and 1905. These images form the majority of visual evidence of Madeline’s craftwork.

Cross-referencing this series of photographs with published images and descriptions of those objects helps to date them. Frances and Mary Allen, sisters who lived in Deerfield down the road from the Manse, offered their photographs as part of the village’s “Industries.” Their portraits of local residents, both at work on their crafts and in colonial garb posed outside their homes, provide important visual documentation of how the town projected its colonial revival image. In addition to taking these portraits, the Allen sisters recorded Madeline’s work, probably at her request. The surviving negatives for this series of images are housed at the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association. The negatives are numbered consecutively, presumably by the Allens; therefore, all the images were probably taken at one time or fairly close to each other.

Craft show reviews in House Beautiful and Handicraft occasionally included Allen photographs or descriptions of the objects depicted, thereby offering a latest possible date of manufacture. A photograph of a necklace with a double fish pendant on a double silver-link chain (fig. 6) was published in a House Beautiful article

¹³⁰ Catalogue of Exhibition--Paintings, Etchings and Drawings; Jewellery and Embroideries (Old Deerfield, MA: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 1908).

by Mary L. Riley in October 1905. Therefore, all of the objects photographed in the series probably date before then.

The earliest dates, however, still remain a problem. One object, an etched brass bowl with a chrysanthemum pattern on the interior (fig. 4), appears in the Allen sisters' photographs. The bowl is also featured in an Allen photograph published in House Beautiful in 1899, moving the latest possible date of manufacture back to that year. This bowl is one of a few objects surviving in a private collection and it is marked "MADELENE YALE WYNNE / 1880." It is unlikely, however, that Madeline made the bowl nineteen years before the photo. If the date is correct, Madeline had to have made it shortly before her first major trip to Europe that autumn, three years before the work with "brass and acids" mentioned in her mother's letters. The most probable theory is that Madeline gave the bowl to a friend around the time that it was photographed and marked it then, misremembering the date she made it.

This bowl also offers a means of comparison between the black-and-white Allen photographs and the actual objects depicted. The juxtaposition of the lively surface of the etched bowl and its appearance in the photograph makes the absence of other objects which appear in the Allen photographs even more exasperating.

British Influence

Prominent British and European craftspeople visited the United States, both to lecture and to exhibit their work. Madeline was probably quite familiar with English Arts and Crafts work. She traveled to England at least twice during her life, and was a member of the Lyceum Club in London.¹³¹

¹³¹ Who Was Who in America 4 (Chicago: Marquis-Who's Who, Inc., 1968), 1039.

Madeline's work is somewhat similar in style to that of C. R. Ashbee, the prominent British metalsmith and founder of a utopian crafts community (see figs. 7 and 8).¹³² Ashbee's multi-linked necklaces and bracelets set with stones are comparable in composition and bold character to Madeline's. Not surprisingly, Madeline was familiar with the renowned British metalsmith's work and probably met him on more than one occasion. Madeline's jewelry was displayed alongside Ashbee's in a Hull House art exhibition, reviewed in the Hull House Bulletin for June, 1897. The review stated that their work showed "the same interest of personality" and the "difference of the individual characteristics of the workers was distinctly observable, each designer using the material to express his idea."¹³³ In November of 1898, Ashbee spoke at Hull House at a meeting of the Chicago Society of Arts and Crafts.¹³⁴ His travel journals, housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, may reveal whether he and Madeline were friends or mere acquaintances.

Madeline's work also resembles the work of another British jeweler, Edgar Simpson. There is no way to tell whether Madeline ever saw Simpson's bold 1901 necklace with a fish pendant (fig. 9). However, Madeline's fish necklace, with its central double-fish pendant and multiple chain composition, bears a striking similarity (fig. 6).

¹³² After the failure of this community, Ashbee wrote a book blaming, among other factors, the capitalist system for demanding prices too low to support the time and skill necessary to produce objects true the Arts and Crafts ideals. See Charles Robert Ashbee, Craftsmanship in Competitive Industry (London: Essex House Press, 1908).

¹³³ Hull House Bulletin 2, no. 5 (June 1897): 4.

¹³⁴ Hull House Bulletin 3, no. 4/5 (April/May 1898): 5.

May Morris, daughter of William Morris and an accomplished embroiderer, attended a dinner held by the Chicago Society of Arts and Crafts in December 1910.¹³⁵ Madeline was a likely attendee.

At least in this limited examination of American and European Arts and Crafts jewelers, Madeline's style is more easily related to the bolder approach of the English craftspeople cited above than the American designers with whom Madeline had more frequent contact.

A Style of Her Own

Madeline's brash honesty of execution and lack of precision distinguishes her work from that of her contemporaries. The surface quality is entirely different. She employs some popular motifs (peacocks and rabbits) and uses "traditional" Arts and Crafts materials and techniques (silver, copper, and brass; wire work and filigree; cabochon cut stones), but the effect of daring individuality and intense personality distinguishes Madeline's work.

Instead of developing a style which would show off precise metalworking skills to their best advantage, Madeline chose to concentrate on producing provocative objects which evoke visceral responses from the viewer. She developed a style which could "never be confounded"¹³⁶ with the work of other jewelers of her time. The fine technique and control, as well as the pleasing composition of better-known artists' work fulfills the Arts and Crafts ideal of highly skilled work done by specialists in a particular

¹³⁵ Handicraft 3, no. 10 (January 1911): 366.

¹³⁶ Elizabeth MacDougall, "Some Recent Arts and Crafts Work," House Beautiful 14, no. 2 (July 1903): 73.

medium. Chicago's Kalo Shop produced objects which display a careful symmetry and attention to finish (fig. 10). Florence Koehler, a Chicago silversmith whose work was frequently displayed alongside Madeline's at Society shows, made similarly studied objects with delicate detailing (fig. 11).¹³⁷ Arthur J. Stone's objects have highly reflective surfaces. The superb technical quality of the Boston jeweler's work can be attributed to his extensive training in England at the Sheffield National School of Design before his emigration to Massachusetts in 1884.¹³⁸ These metalworkers, like most of the acclaimed artisans of the period, executed their work meticulously. Even roughly hammered surfaces have a careful overall regularity.

Madeline was not concerned with symmetry or height of finish. Rather than fitting neatly into a stylistic group with other jewelers of the time, Madeline's jewelry appears at first somewhat sloppy and unrefined. When compared to the work of her contemporaries, the tool work practically jumps off the surfaces of her pins (fig. 12).

Madeline may have perfected her craft technically, but she did not chose to show her abilities through virtuoso exactitude of execution. Instead, Madeline chose to manipulate natural forms to present an emphatic and aggressive effect. Her necklaces and brooches are frequently asymmetrical. Even symmetrical designs have uneven patterns on their surface. In some cases she seems to have slapped objects together in a frenzy. One might assume that Madeline was not an exceptionally good technician, yet on close inspection of the few surviving objects, her work appears well-constructed. Soldered joints are sturdy, bezels hold stones firmly in place, and enameling is well

¹³⁷ Wynne, "Arts and Crafts," 69-75.

¹³⁸ Kaplan, *Art that is Life*, 281.

executed. The Allen photographs reveal enough detail to indicate that her other work was similarly technically sound.

The off-line punches and uneven links may speak to a present viewer of hasty work and lack of refinement but her contemporaries extolled Madeline's work. They considered the objects' immediacy attractive and compelling. This contemporary admiration indicates the importance of Madeline Yale Wynne's contribution to the craft revival. It broadens the definition of accepted norms and diversifies the range, style, and technique to be studied today.

One necklace (fig. 13), silver set with blister pearls or abalone shell, is quite provocative. The simple double-strand design is neither delicate nor meticulously crafted. The hole from which one of the baubles hangs is off-center, the bezels are not uniformly fitted, and some of the link elements appear flattened and unbalanced. The overall effect of the soft, dappled surface, however, is one of unity. The crudeness of the finish alerts the viewer to the creative process and invites closer scrutiny of the necklace's composition. Perhaps Madeline was less concerned with achieving a polished, professional effect, and more interested in giving form to the visions she had in her head.

According to her reviewers and memorialists, Madeline was one of a kind, both in her sympathetic yet mischievous personality and in her bold work. Her ability to experiment in different media combined with her less refined style may be why Sharon Darling has called Madeline a dilettante. All contemporary accounts discredit this assessment.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Darling, Chicago Metalsmiths, 62. I am assuming that Darling uses this term pejoratively. Darling also incorrectly states that Madeline was a widow and misreports

Madeline's unique combinations of color, both of enamels and of stones, also distinguished her work from that of her contemporaries. Madeline's enamels have been called "revelations in color."¹⁴⁰ Sylvester Baxter, in his essay "The Movement for Village Industries" states that Madeline's work "has its place here as an expression of the artistic individuality of one to whom the movement is much indebted for encouragement." He credits Madeline with the revival of the "lost art" of enameling with two or more colors held within one partition.¹⁴¹ Mabel Key, in her review of the 1899 Chicago Arts and Crafts Society exhibition, declares:

... in looking over the interesting examples of Mrs. Madeline Yale Wynne's work in hammered silver and copper with enamels one felt not only the utility of her bowls and buckles, but the vital force of the artist's originality and purpose. The buckles are unique inventions, some rugged and definite in design, but finished with a fullness of rich color, others hammered into regular forms suggesting quaint fancies.¹⁴²

Elizabeth Emery's note of disappointment that Madeline had not submitted jewelry to a 1904 exhibition specifically pointed to her "marvelous red golds and green golds and coppery golds."¹⁴³ A House Beautiful reviewer described Madeline's work as assembled "with an unerring eye for color that is now gorgeous and barbaric, now

Madeline's date of death.

¹⁴⁰ Margaret Edgewood, "Holiday Gifts," House Beautiful 9, no. 1 (December 1901): 5.

¹⁴¹ Baxter, "The Movement for Village Industries," 152.

¹⁴² Mabel Key, "A Review of the Recent Exhibition of the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society," House Beautiful 6, no. 1 (June 1899): 6.

¹⁴³ Emery, "Arts and Crafts," 133.

subtle and delicate.” A silver necklace with amethysts and blue enameling, named “Shadow on the Lake,” evoked this response:

. . . surely the purple, the silver, the blue, and the transparent light are all present in a large body of water, and the deepening blue color of the enamel suggests a cloud stealing over its azure surface.¹⁴⁴

Most descriptions of Madeline’s work specifically mentions her use of color and mastery of enameling technique. Unfortunately, none of the objects so extolled survives. Necklaces such as “Shadow on the Lake” and another example comprising linked enameled plaques (fig. 14) can only be appreciated for their composition and texture as revealed in black and white photos. The reviewers’ words offer the only clue to the full impact of these objects.

Madeline’s work was frequently cited as the most intriguing and compelling in shows reviewed by House Beautiful and Handicraft. Perhaps she was coddled because of her extensive written contributions to those magazines as well as her activity on the Arts and Crafts society executive boards in Deerfield and Chicago. Through frequent and well-received short story contributions to magazines such as The Atlantic Monthly and Harper’s New Monthly, as well as her articles for the craft journals, Madeline had developed a national reputation as a writer. She was an impressive personality and her high profile could have prompted some of the adulatory appraisals of her work.

Such a possibility, however, is unlikely. The one point that reviewers made over and over again is that Madeline’s personality shone through everything she made.

¹⁴⁴ McDougall, “Some Recent,” 72-3.

While the particulars of Madeline's quick wit and vivacity may have been well known and added to the reviewers' interpretation of her work, the objects still hold their own.

Madeline's work in other media was equally well received. Her raffia baskets were described as "but one of innumerable manifestations of her artistic temperament," having a "sturdy, humorous quality."¹⁴⁵ One basket in particular, "The Witch Basket," caught the reviewer's eye, perhaps because Madeline had described it as depicting "the house where the witch lived and 'the church she did not go to [her emphasis].'" The Handicraft review of Deerfield's 1911 summer show insisted:

. . . he who has been to Deerfield and failed to see . . . the samplers of Mrs. Wynne has missed a medieval touch which makes all the more pertinent the comparing of the Deerfield exhibit with the fairs of the little walled cities of Germany and France.¹⁴⁶

Beyond Arts and Crafts

That Madeline made objects which evoked stories is not surprising. Every other aspect of Madeline's life seems to have revolved around story-telling. The articles she wrote for crafts magazines use anecdotes and whimsical digressions to enliven an otherwise straightforward description of a cupboard or a glass bottle. In "Cupboards and their Kin" Madeline focuses on the "history" of a Deerfield cupboard, inventing a fantastical past much the way Walt Disney's sorcerer's apprentice breathes life into broomsticks:

What a chatter the blue ware makes up there on that shelf beneath the frilled shell top! There is a murmur of suppers at quilting-bees, of

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 72.

¹⁴⁶ "The Deerfield Fair," Handicraft 4, no. 5 (August 1911): 185.

collations at ministers' installments, of thanksgiving dinners. . . . What a symphony of pewter!¹⁴⁷

Madeline's account of collecting German bottles takes the reader on her "merry quest" through London and Canterbury, back to her own home where the collection stands in "Bottle Row, Colonial Mantle, Massachusetts." She muses:

Is it not worth while to have one's historical imagination awakened even by a bottle and to be taken back two or three centuries, way off into the upper Black Forest where the glass blowing industry took root and flourished, the peasants building the kilns and carrying on the work?¹⁴⁸

Madeline's "historical imagination" appears in her short stories as well. Like Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, and Henry David Thoreau, Madeline infused her writing with a romanticized view of America's past. She filled her short stories with bits of information about how people lived in the past, or mysterious incidents relating to characters' ancestors. Throughout her writings, Madeline expresses a fascination with the power of Nature and Man's struggle to overcome it.

Sara Burns, in her article "George Fuller: The Hawthorne of Our Art," discusses the relationship between George Fuller's paintings and Nathaniel Hawthorne's fiction.¹⁴⁹ Fuller's ethereal style captured the mystical quality of Hawthorne's writing. This connection further emphasizes the necessity to examine a

¹⁴⁷ Wynne, "Cupboards and their Kin," 460.

¹⁴⁸ Wynne, "The Merry Quest," 84.

¹⁴⁹ Sara Burns, "George Fuller: The Hawthorne of Our Art," Winterthur Portfolio 18, no. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 1983): 123-45.

person's complete surroundings and influences before defining them as restricted to one aspect of their place in history.

Madeline's short stories and articles evoke a mysterious quality similar to that cited in her metalwork, basketry, and woodcarving. This stylistic continuity between media points to Madeline's role as a contributor to turn-of-the-century American culture as a whole, rather than just to the craft revival. Her example raises questions about how specific philosophies of the era fit into general cultural trends and suggests that the motivations of other "Arts and Crafts" artisans were much more complex than is usually assumed.

Conclusion

Memorial essays and obituaries represent Madeline Yale Wynne as a central force of the American craft revival. Her vivacious and "kind" personality enhanced the way she was viewed. Perhaps she was given the benefit of the doubt because she was such a strong and engaging personality. Even if Madeline was an inspired artist, present-day definitions of "good work" frequently disregard the original Arts and Crafts ingredients of ingenuity and enthusiasm and put in their place the more tangible qualities which survive in the works themselves. Other participants, perhaps less involved in running societies and lecturing, certainly made substantial stylistic contributions; however, one must not forget that the elements of community and discourse were as important to the revival as the objects produced. In retrospect, all we can easily focus on are the objects and their dynamic visual qualities and trends, because the processes of exploration and debate diminished with the end of the era.

The story of Madeline Yale Wynne's life is not simply the biography of an under-represented contributor to the Arts and Crafts movement in America. Her example prompts one to ask fundamental questions about the Arts and Crafts movement itself. Madeline's eclectic background and vast literary interests suggest something obvious, but easily overlooked. Her work was influenced by much more than a simple loyalty to the ideals of the craft revival.

Madeline received substantial obituaries and was listed in biographical dictionaries. In these brief accounts of Madeline's life, she is usually listed as an author first, artist second, and metalworker third.¹⁵⁰ The prominence of her writing career does not lessen the importance of her contribution to the other two fields. Her letters demonstrate a more emotional attachment to painting and crafts than to writing. She does not find it necessary to discuss writing as she describes the intricate process of exploring painting and craft techniques.

The self-proclaimed Arts and Crafts movement was less a movement per se and more a group of people who needed a way to legitimize their efforts to make a living at making crafts in an increasingly industrialized world. The Arts and Crafts idealists of the mid-nineteenth century supplied craftspeople with several guidelines within which most of these artists worked and some flourished.

Reviewers loved Madeline's work, extolling it above most others in reviews of Chicago exhibitions and bemoaning Madeline's absence from shows; however, present-day perceptions of the Arts and Crafts movement and the objects its followers

¹⁵⁰ "Madeline Yale Wynne," Greenfield Gazette and Courier, 5 January 1918; Putnam, "Necrology," 420-24; Who Was Who, 1039.

produced are based on the objects that survive and that appeal to current aesthetic taste. The lack of objects for display should not overly influence the interpretation of the craft revival as a whole.

The diverse influences of the late nineteenth century were injected into everything the Arts and Crafts contributors did. As Madeline Yale Wynne's work and the facts of her life reflect the other intellectual pursuits of the time, perhaps closer scrutiny of others' work will reveal similarly varied influences. Madeline Yale Wynne's example reminds historians of the importance of variation between individual participants within a larger movement and begs a reexamination of the American craft revival as an integral part of cultural life at the turn of the twentieth century.



Figure 1

Madeline Yale Wynne and Henry Fuller Dancing at Frary House Costume Ball, 1890.

Photograph by Emma Coleman. Collection of Historic Deerfield, Inc.
Photograph courtesy of Historic Deerfield, Inc.

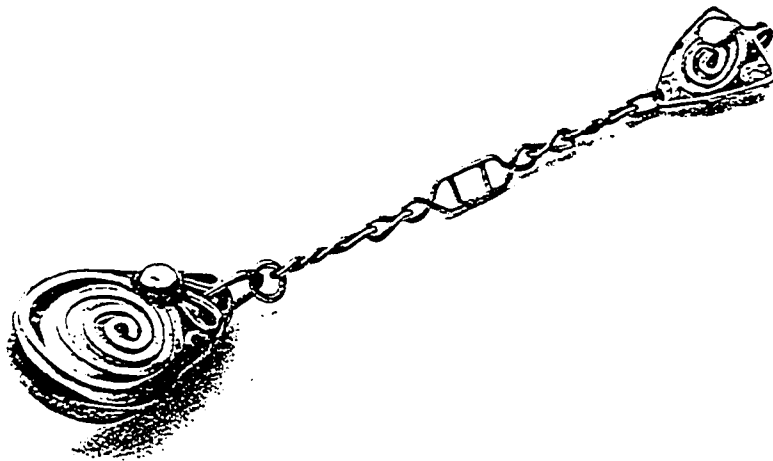


Figure 2 **Silver and Rock Crystal Watch Fob, c. 1900.** Madeline Yale Wynne. Private Collection.
Photograph from Wendy Kaplan, "The Art that is Life": The Arts and Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1920 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1987), p. 264, fig. 125a.

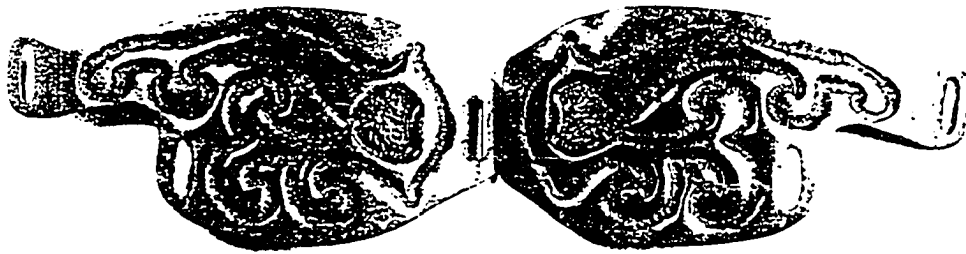


Figure 3 **Copper Belt Buckle.** Madeline Yale Wynne. Collection of Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Memorial Hall Museum, Deerfield, MA.
Photograph courtesy of Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.



Figure 4

Brass and Copper Bowls and Buckle. Madeline Yale Wynne.
Photograph by Frances and Mary Allen, c. 1905. Collection of
Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Memorial Hall Museum,
Deerfield, MA.
Photograph courtesy of Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.

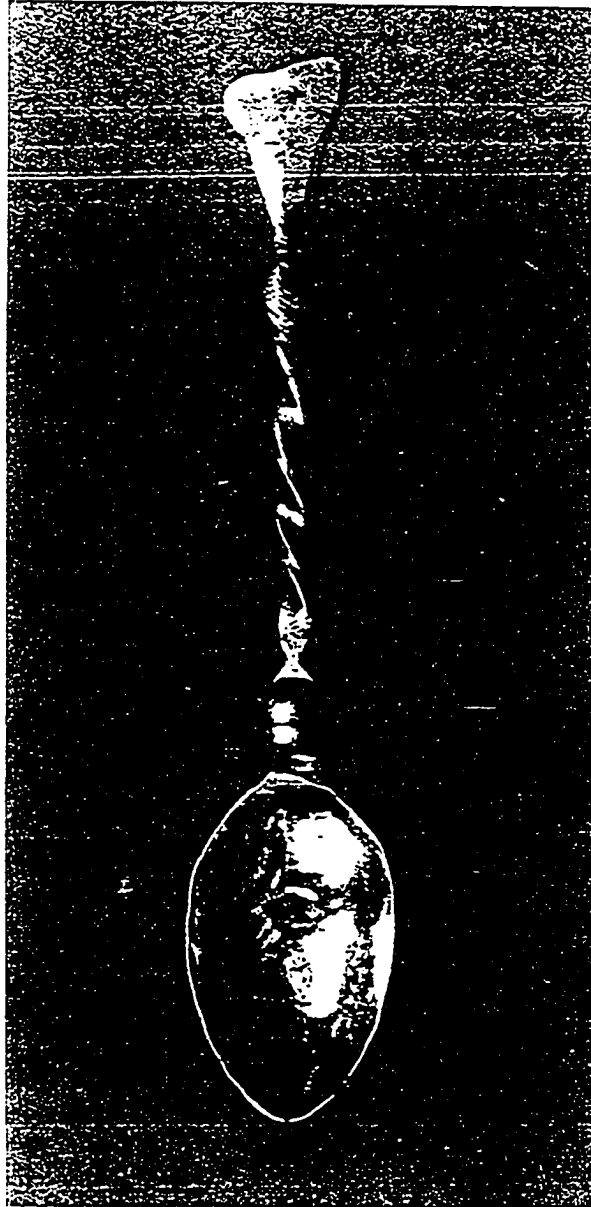


Figure 5 **Silver Spoon.** Madeline Yale Wynne. Collection of Historic Deerfield, Inc.
Photograph courtesy of Historic Deerfield, Inc.



Figure 6

Double Fish Necklace. Madeline Yale Wynne.
Photograph by Frances and Mary Allen, c. 1905. Collection of
Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, MA.
Photograph courtesy of Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.



Figure 7 **Multi-link Necklace with Cabochons.** Madeline Yale Wynne.
Photograph by Frances and Mary Allen, c. 1905. Collection of
Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, MA.
Photograph courtesy of Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.

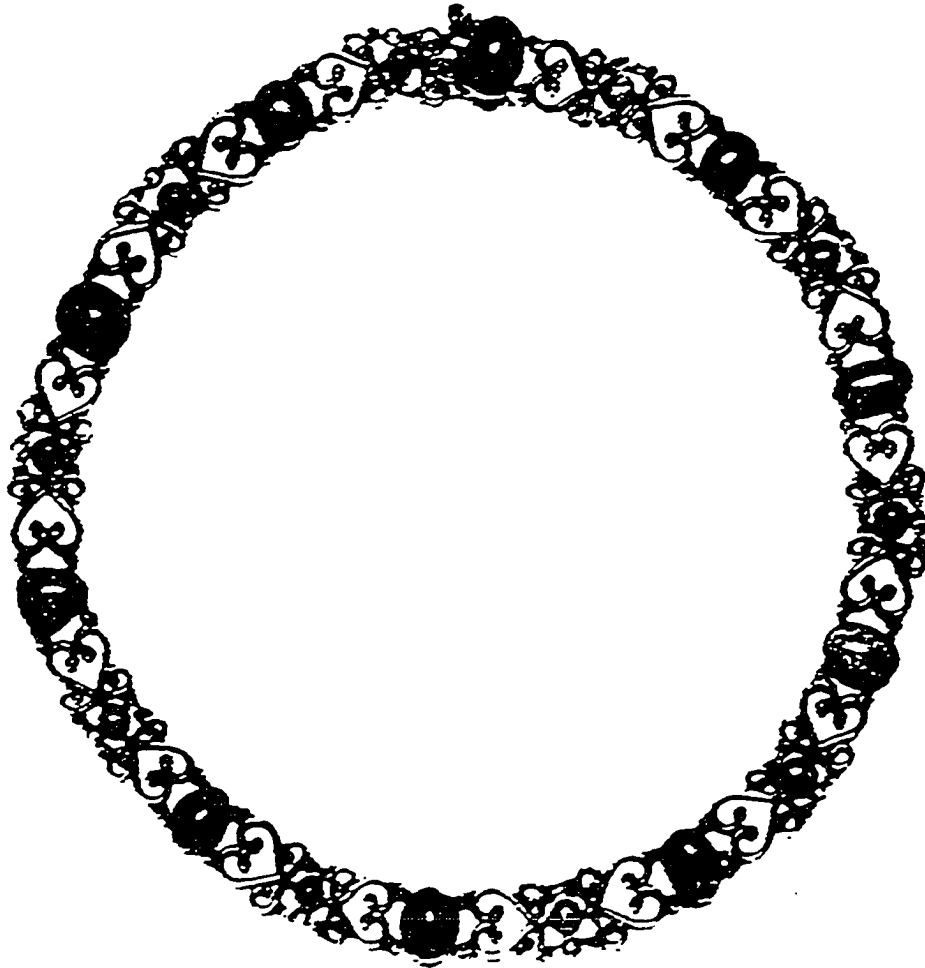


Figure 8

Silver Necklace with Turquoise, c. 1903. C. R. Ashbee.
Collection of Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England.
Photograph from Shirley Bury, Jewellery 1789-1910, vol. 2. 1862-1910
(London: Antique Collectors' Club, 1991), p. 633, p. 169E.



Figure 9

Double Fish Necklace. Edgar Simpson (working 1896-1910).
Collection of The Fine Art Society, London, England.
Photograph from Charlotte Gere and Geoffrey C. Munn, Artists'
Jewellery: Pre-Raphaelite to Arts and Crafts (Woodbridge, Suffolk:
Antiques Collectors' Club Ltd., 1989), p. 47 pl. 18.



Figure 10 **Silver Pendant on Chain with Moonstones.** The Kalo Shop.
Photograph from Ark Antiques catalogue #92-1, p. 7, pl. 6.
Photograph courtesy of Ark Antiques.

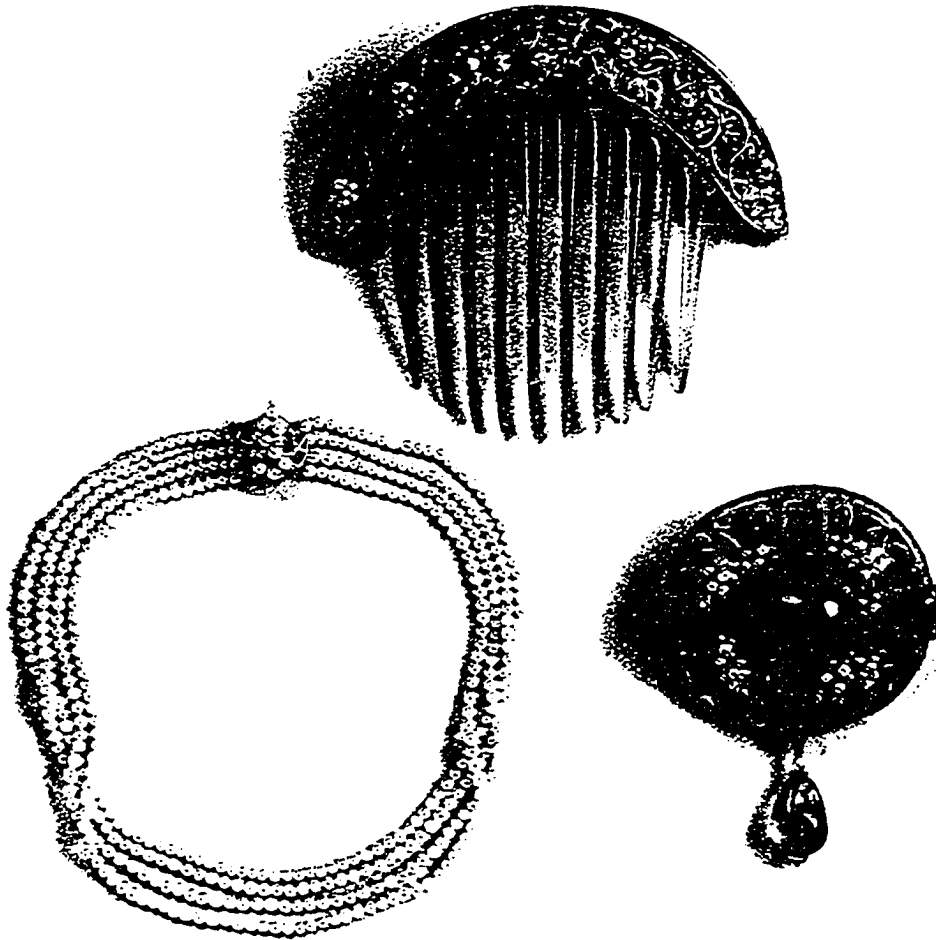


Figure 11 **Jewelry Ensemble, c. 1905.** Florence D. Koehler. Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
 Photograph from Wendy Kaplan, "The Art that is Life": The Arts and Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1920 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1987), p. 266, pl. 127.

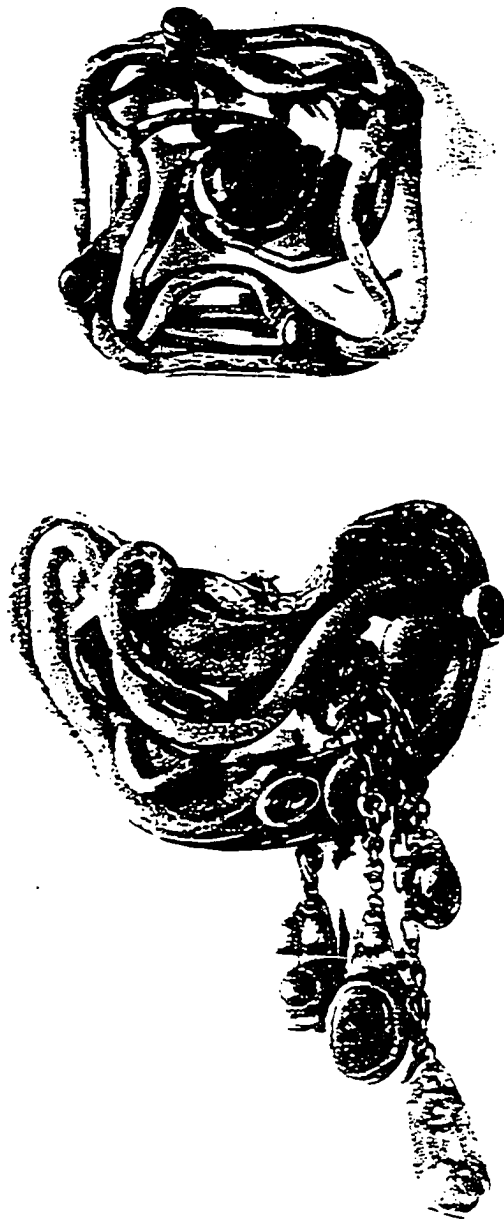


Figure 12 **Two Pins with Stones.** Madeline Yale Wynne.
Photograph by Frances and Mary Allen, c. 1905. Collection of
Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, MA.
Photograph courtesy of Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.



Figure 13 **Necklace with Blister Pearls.** Madeline Yale Wynne.
Photograph by Frances and Mary Allen, c. 1905. Collection of
Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, MA.
Photograph courtesy of Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.



Figure 14 **Necklace with Enameled Plaques.** Madeline Yale Wynne.
Photograph by Frances and Mary Allen, c. 1905. Collection of
Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, MA.
Photograph courtesy of Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.

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