

JEWELRY IN AMERICA / Martha Gandy Fales.--Suffolk, England: Antique Collectors' Club, November 1995.--450 p.: ill.--ISBN 1-85149-223-2: \$69.50.

In the past decade, the Antique Collectors' Club has been responsible for several important titles dealing with all aspects of jewelry. Histories, collection catalogues, technologies, gems and jewelers have all been the subjects of monographic studies, however a volume devoted to jewelry prevalent in one geographic region has not been published until now. This book does not simply present the jewelry made in America, it establishes the role played by jewelry in American society. As such its intention is to fill a gap in the lacunae of information, to help identify, document and illustrate prevalent forms of jewelry owned and worn in the United States (but not necessarily made in America) for the period 1600-1900.

Jewelry has long been classified a minor art, and as such, relegated to a place of insignificance in the art world. It also suffers from its vulnerability; unlike other minor arts, it can easily be lost, stolen, pulled apart and remade or simply worn away with time. The true value of jewelry as a document has been undermined yet the study of jewelry is a potential source of knowledge about customs, style, beliefs, creativity and technical innovations.

The volume is arranged in four chronological sections which clarify the technological and stylistic changes taking place. This historical arrangement also facilitates the work of the collector enabling one to note the importance or value of a particular piece. Each of the four divisions features a chapter discussing the role played by individual jewelers of that period. Other chapters are devoted to specific forms of jewelry: miniatures, hair and mourning jewelry and bridal jewelry. The historical and societal facets of each type is elucidated through example. The section on hair and mourning jewelry discusses the books published during this era and the influence they enjoyed with both maker and buyer. A case in point was *Hair Ornaments for Jewelry and Souvenirs*, an unacknowledged American edition of the British publication *The Lock of Hair* (London: A. Gouboud & Son, 1872) by Miss Alexanna Speight.

Original documents, both textual and visual, are cleverly implemented to verify the customs of the period. The chapter on mourning jewelry quotes a passage from a grandmother's will bequeathing to each of her granddaughters a ring valued at 20 shillings. The paintings reproduced throughout the text illustrate how a piece would have been worn, i.e., the portrait of the young Anne Claypoole of Philadelphia shows her wearing a double strand of coral with the gold clasp arranged in the front. The captions to each illustration are wonderfully informative: they include dates, collection, materials, technique and significance of each piece. When appropriate, they provide further bits of interest such as the wearing of gems as talisman or amulets with each gem or stone warding off a particular illness.

The four chapters on jewelers contain a concise history of the development of this art and business in the United States beginning with 1608 when the first jeweler came to Virginia. He was totally unsuccessful due not only to a lack of customers but to a sorry

lack of working materials. With the colonies' independence and the gradual increase in population and financial stability, came the development of several major cities. These cities were able to boast a local jeweler, and thus was a truly American style established.

Martha Gandy Fales, curator of silver at the Winterthur Museum and author of several essays on American silver and silversmiths, has carefully constructed this volume making it informative reading to a wide-ranging audience. Her meticulous documentation will be useful to scholars, her easy narrative style will appeal to the interested lay reader, her material culture approach will assist students while the introduction of such chapters as "Design from Abroad" will capture the interest of historians. The high-quality color plates and numerous black and white illustrations will attract collectors. Art libraries will find that the potential usefulness of this volume is enhanced by its extensive index and comprehensive bibliography.

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