



Madeline Yale Wynne

1847 - 1918

The Garden of Hearts bride's chest

An exceptional, rare & important American Arts & Crafts bride's chest. c1903. Carved, painted and bejewelled, with repousse metalwork, pyrography and strapwork iron hinges.

Approx 45" wide, 30" high, 21" deep. Further details upon application.

Archive imagery courtesy of Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Memorial Hall Museum, Deerfield, Massachusetts

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Background

Madeline Yale Wynne was an extremely talented and highly skilled American artist, designer, teacher, writer, and philanthropist, who was a major influence on the *American Arts & Crafts Movement* in Chicago and surrounding areas. An important figure in her own right.

She was the daughter of Linus Yale Jr, the famous inventor of the Yale locks and Katherine Brooks. Born on the 25th of September 1847 in Newport, Herkimer County, New York and died on the 4th of January 1918 in Asheville, Buncombe County, North Carolina, USA.

In 1865, at the tender age of 18, she married Henry Winn and had two sons, Philip Henry and Sydney Yale. Her marriage was unfortunately short lived and following her divorce c1874, she changed the spelling of her name to Wynne.

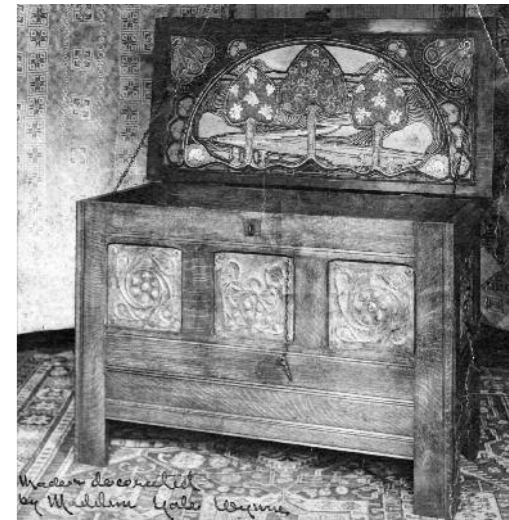
She worked successfully across many mediums, including metalwork, jewellery, painting and furniture design. She was initially schooled in the technical arts, especially metal working, by her father and then subsequently went on to study painting at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston c1877-8 and then later at the Art Students League of New York, followed by a stint in Europe. It was there (in Florence, Italy) in the 1880's that she met her fellow craftsman *Annie Cabot Putnam*; from which a lifelong partnership developed, after initially sharing a studio in Boston.

In 1883, she began sharing her home and studio with Annie Putnam and together in 1885 they purchased the historic Willard House in Deerfield, Massachusetts, (later renamed "The Manse") which they lovingly restored with the help of her son Philip. In 1904, they became full time residents of Deerfield, where they were extremely active in practicing and supporting the arts. They were both expert metal smiths, and were generally very influential in developing arts & crafts in the community, including arranging exhibition tours of the varied craftwork of the village and taking on speaking engagements.

Indeed, Madeline help found the *Deerfield Society of Arts and Crafts* in 1901, which acted as an umbrella organisation for the Arts & Crafts Movement in the village. There, existed a broad array of artistry & skills, including jewellery, photography, weaving, basketry, rugs, and furniture.

She also turned to writing in 1895 and her supernatural short story "*The Little Room*" was published in Harper's Magazine. She also wrote for the magazines, *Home Beautiful*, *Harper's Monthly* and *Atlantic Monthly*, amongst other publications.

In a fitting tribute by her son, Madeline Wynne was "a woman of many and various gifts, a spirit brilliant and rare. To her friends, and few people had so many friends, the greatest of her many successes was in the art of living."





Madeline's Furniture and our "Garden of Hearts" chest



Madeline was a connoisseur of Deerfield's colonial furniture and architecture and wrote many high-profile articles, including a piece in House Beautiful entitled "Brides and Bridal Chests", referring to Connecticut Valley joined chests. Around 1899-1901 she created and exhibited many unique quirky designs of carved and painted boxes and small chests, using a variety of techniques, including pyrography, repousse metalwork, and utilising semi-precious stones. Her idiosyncratic wood and metal designs exhibited animated, bold and sinuous lines. An unusual and fine example was a jewel box she exhibited in 1901, incorporating not only the above techniques but also curiously, a repousse panel showing a rabbit, representing the Buddhist legend of the moon rabbit (see archive image). Luckily this moon rabbit also appears on our chest!

As well as the boxes and small chests, Madeline designed and built two full sized chests. The first was an oak chest made in 1899 for Bertha Bullock of Chicago, who married a William Folsom in 1900; the design based on an oak Connecticut joined chest from the 17thC. In addition, it had religious symbolism in the form of a pyro-graphic design of the Virgin Mary, and some sturdy iron strap hinges. The inside of the lid was painted with a white Easter lily (symbol of hope and resurrection) against a mountain landscape. This chest is now in the Collection of the Speed Art Museum in Louisville, Kentucky, USA.

This, our Garden of Hearts chest was designed and made in 1903 (fully incised to back "**Made in America (over) MYW (over) 1903**") and a genuine tour de force.



This is the second and only other known, full sized chest by Madeline. The joinery and proportions are based on 18thC Connecticut Valley chests. It is a beautifully carved chest, stained, painted and bejewelled (turquoise stones), with elaborate heavy iron strap work hinges & clasps (most probably executed by Deerfield's local blacksmith of high repute, Cornelius Kelly), stylised repousse metalwork panels and whimsical pyro-graphic designs.

Traditionally, the panels on the facade and sides of the chest would have also been wooden but here these have been replaced by her wonderfully crafted repousse metalwork panels with sinuous designs. The outside of the lid is decorated in a variety of mediums, with playful goblins, a peacock and the rabbit moon.

The inside of the lid is decorated with a romantic, idyllic scene, which Madeline described as "three trees, two bearing orange blossoms, one fruit. The river of life flows through the garden and the web of circumstances, some of earth, some heaven born, binds all together". The Buddhist legend rabbit moon features here again. According to papers held at the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Library (PVMA), Annie Putnam believed that Madeline Yale Wynne was happier with the decorative scheme of her bride's chest, "The Garden of Hearts," than anything she (Madeline) had done"

The Garden of Hearts chest travelled to England in 1918 and its whereabouts have remained a mystery until now; recently rediscovered by us. Miraculously, in time for both the centenary of her passing in 1918 and the time the chest's whereabouts were last known.

Our thanks to Suzanne L Flynt, Curator of Memorial Hall Museum in Deerfield, Massachusetts for her generosity and help.

For further information on Madeline Yale Wynne and Deerfield Arts & Crafts go to: www.artscrafts-deerfield.org

References:

Poetry To The Earth; The Arts & Crafts Movement in Deerfield by Suzanne L Flynt, pub 2012 Pocumtuck Valley Memorial association

House Beautiful magazine Oct 1903; article by Madeline Yale Wynne, "The Influence of Arts & Crafts" pages 327-333

Annie Putnam to Isadore Pratt Taylor, December 1, [1918]. Taylor Family Papers, PVMA Library.



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