

Minnesota 1900
Art and Life on the Upper Mississippi
1890–1915

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Art for Life's Sake: The Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis

Marcia G. Anderson

MINNESOTA OWES MUCH OF ITS REPUTATION AS AN active center of the international Arts and Crafts movement to one small but energetic organization: The Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis. Active between 1904 and 1918, the guild shared many of the social and aesthetic goals of arts and crafts organizations worldwide. It championed the distinctive properties of materials, the skill of individual craftsmen, and the satisfaction to be found in making and using unique, handmade objects. The guild understood its work to be an alternative to mass-produced and often indifferently crafted factory products and the repetitive labor required to produce them. In Minnesota, however, these broad arts and crafts ideals assumed a distinctive local inflection.

The Handicraft Guild was founded, led, and to a large extent was staffed by diversely talented and highly motivated women. For some of them—notably those who had been trained as painters, sculptors, or art educators before joining—arts and crafts work offered a way around the traditional gendering of “fine art” as male, “craft” as female. Perhaps even more importantly, the guild offered a means of publicly asserting and disseminating certain social values. The Arts and Crafts movement had cultivated personal attributes such as patience, self-knowledge, and cooperation among its adherents. In Minneapolis such values assumed primary importance, however, colored further by the region’s populist commitment. As arts and crafts workers, and specifically as guild members, Minnesota women quietly offered an alternative to a cost-centered, success-

oriented, male-dominated society by spreading a different value system. The singular lasting accomplishment of the Handicraft Guild was to permanently institutionalize these ideals into the region. Through the design and construction of useful objects, one would learn not only technical skills, but aesthetic discrimination, personal self-discipline, and ultimately a sense of one’s own value within a harmonious social community.

The Arts and Crafts movement began in England in the mid-nineteenth century. In analyzing the process and product of the Industrial Revolution in England, John Ruskin, William Morris, Thomas Carlyle, Augustus W. N. Pugin, and others concluded that inferior quality machine-made goods had diminished the beauty in everyday life. They decried inappropriate use of materials, ineffective design, and poor construction of industrial products, as well as the tedium of factory labor. As a model for an alternative, more humane system of production, these writers looked to the crafts guilds that had built the Gothic cathedrals of medieval Europe. Each guild, a professional organization representing a particular craft, not only trained apprentices but set and maintained standards for work and wages, provided a vehicle for social interaction, and sometimes supported members unable to work.

Among the first to put arts and crafts principles into practice was C. R. Ashbee, who founded his London School and Guild of Handicraft in 1887 and 1888. His guild, a communal society made up primarily of male artists directed by a single, recognized leader, served as a



1915–16 Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis session booklet cover. Minnesota Historical Society Collections. Photograph by Gary Mortensen and Robert Fogt.

model for many later arts and crafts organizations. In East London in 1888 he identified the guild's two chief goals: "[to] establish a standard in craftsmanship . . . [and an] education in the crafts."¹ A local economic depression coupled with disputes among the artists—difficulties which were to plague subsequent arts and crafts groups as well—led to the guild's failure in 1908, although some members continued to work and teach after that time.

In contrast to most English arts and crafts organizations, which emphasized social concerns, the group active at the Glasgow School of Art in Scotland, under the leadership of the architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh, concentrated on design reform. Combining the formal language of the art nouveau style with arts and crafts ideals, the Glasgow style proved more influential on the continent and in America than in England. In Austria it was admired by the founders of the *Wiener Werkstätte* (loosely, "Viennese Workshops"), Josef Hoffman and Koloman Moser, who had, in turn, also profited from their visits to Ashbee's Guild.

In 1897, a year after the death of the Arts and Crafts movement's chief proponent, William Morris, Boston's Society of Arts and Crafts was founded. That same year it staged its first arts and crafts exhibition, an event considered the first institutionalized presentation of arts and crafts objects in this country. Other U.S. cities with crafts organiza-

tions developed quickly from that point on. American arts and crafts associations varied greatly from city to city, however; some were affiliated with fine arts or academic institutions, such as the school of the Art Institute of Chicago, The Chicago Arts and Crafts Society, and The Detroit Society Arts and Crafts.² Others had no institutional affiliation but were inspired by a local hand craft tradition, such as the Society of Blue and White Needlework of Deerfield, Massachusetts and the Hull-House settlement in Chicago. In some cases, individuals provided the focus for an arts and crafts association, a workshop, or studio serving as a community center for fellow artists and a marketplace for arts and crafts objects.³ Certain programs centered on one craft medium, art pottery being the most common. Others, the Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis among them, represented a variety of aesthetic and social concerns that stretched well beyond any particular product or skill.⁴

The American public was introduced to principles of the Arts and Crafts movement through these societies and associations, whose mission was spread by local newspapers, existing arts organizations, and specialized periodicals (e.g., *House Beautiful*, *The Ladies Home Journal*, *The International Studio*, *Arts and Decoration*, *Keramic Studio*, and *The Craftsman*). These publications printed exhibition reviews, statements of new design philosophy, and suggestions for home decoration. They advertised lecture tours and announced curricula offered by guilds and schools. It was through these pages that the ideals of the American Arts and Crafts movement became familiar to Americans.

With no medieval craft tradition, no examples of Romanesque or Gothic building, and only a fledgling group of civic museums to visit, proponents of the Arts and Crafts movement in America created a unique identity for themselves and developed a style drawing on their respective regional building traditions as well as the technical and functional requirements of objects. The movement in the East came closest to following the medieval models and romantic ideals of William Morris, while in the Far West interest focused on the Spanish, Mexican, and Indian heritage of the region. In the wide expanse between the coasts, craftsmen and art educators did not turn to indigenous cultures of the region for inspiration. In articulating the design ideals of a new society, they turned to function as a *raison d'être*, often utilizing Japanese precedent as a stylistic foundation.

Perhaps because Americans did not embrace a common past, American theorists were also less concerned with historical precedent than their European counterparts. With a pragmatism characteristic of the New World population, discussions focused on the appropriate social function of craft training and product and object use. Leaving religious principles of European medievalism aside, the American movement's ideal of social responsibility and improvement was seen to be integrated in craft technique itself, the goals of discipline, patience, and cooperation into technical skill. In the June 1902 issue of *House Beautiful*, Gardner C.



Handicraft Guild building, 89 South 10th Street, Minneapolis, about 1909. Minnesota Historical Society. Photograph by Elgin R. Shepard, Minneapolis.

Teall summed up contemporary attitudes. He proposed a list of “essential” books for the library of every craftsperson, because “technical literature is what we have to take the place of the medieval system of apprenticeship” in America.⁵

The ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement clashed with modern economic theory most dramatically over the appropriate use of machines. English arts and crafts followers were categorically opposed to the employment of machines for any craft production. The more practical, modernist Americans were not as averse. The range of views over machine use, however, reflected a full spectrum of opinions regarding identity and labor. A 1902 debate between Oscar Lovell Triggs, a writer and member of Chicago’s Industrial Art League, and the Minnesota-born Thorstein Veblen, a prominent economist and author of *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, presented the polar attitudes of the time.⁶

While Triggs believed in the use of machinery in crafts production, he was most concerned with camaraderie among craftworkers and the spirit of self-determination in the workplace. Veblen, on the other hand, disdainfully

referred to these attitudes, as represented in Britain’s Arts and Crafts movement, as “sentimental,” an archaic offshoot of nineteenth-century romanticism. Medieval guilds and past societies, he said, offered no solutions to the problems of a twentieth-century democracy. The movement had no hope of success because it denied the machine process which he believed was integral to the development of a modern culture. To abandon the machine process, he insisted, was to abandon all hope of commercial viability; hand-crafted objects were simply too costly for general consumption. Incorporating the professed arts and crafts goals of beauty in “honest” work and products for “everyman,” Veblen proposed an association of art and labor aimed at a larger output of low-cost, standardized goods. Functional goods with a beauty of line and color, he wrote, could be achieved “in fuller measure through the technological expedients of which the machine process disposes.”⁷

The attitude of American arts and crafts associations regarding the use of machines in craft production varied widely. At nearly opposite poles were two of the country’s best-known organizations, Elbert Hubbard’s Roycrofters and Byrdcliffe, led by Ralph Whitehead. Both were located

in New York state. The Roycrofters, in East Aurora, was a group founded on Hubbard's dream of creating an American counterpart to William Morris's Kelmscott Press, but it quickly expanded to include cabinetry, metalwork, and other crafts. As early as 1909, the Roycrofters's small metal pieces (items such as letter openers, vases, stamp boxes, and trays) were available around the country in shops and by mail. Hubbard's community of cottages served as both school and factory and he maintained economic and social control until his death in 1915. The Roycroft shops were a commercial success, making arts and crafts objects widely available.

Sustained mainly through Whitehead's independent wealth and commitment to the Arts and Crafts movement, Byrdcliffe, located in Woodstock, New York, flourished between 1902 and 1915. Byrdcliffe's furniture did not sell well, however. It was both bulky in design and the labor required to produce its characteristic decorative detail made it expensive. As a center for the exchange of ideas, however, Byrdcliffe was extraordinarily successful. With his connections to artists and arts organizations in both the United States and Great Britain, Whitehead was able to attract a steady stream of visitors, lecturers, and aspiring artists, generating an atmosphere of informal interaction that still exists among the many artist communities in the Woodstock area.

THE TWIN CITIES' ART COMMUNITY AND THE ORIGINS OF THE HANDICRAFT GUILD

In contrast to the Roycrofters or Byrdcliffe, the Arts and Crafts movement in Minnesota had neither a single dynamic personality nor a personal fortune at its center. Instead, its arts and crafts organizations, those preceding and including the Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis, were well integrated into an active metropolitan arts community from which each drew support and membership. When the Handicraft Guild was formed in 1904, it adopted a pragmatism and a populism characteristic of the region as it simultaneously addressed three broad areas of concern in the arts community. First was the need for art education and formal craft training, which had been expressed in Minnesota as early as the 1860s, but by 1904 had been only partially addressed in the local schools. At the same time, artists and craftspeople, as well as students, were in need of studio and workshop space and opportunities for the exhibition and sale of work. Finally, there was a less tangible need, seen most clearly by the guild's female leaders, to publicly assert a set of values that challenged modern industrial society's goals of economy, efficiency, and speed. The guild's history is largely a record of how these multiple needs were interrelated within the framework of a single institution.⁸

If the Twin Cities arts community had a geographical center at the turn of the century, it was the studio spaces in the "Old Bandbox" building at 719 Hennepin Avenue.



Bandbox studio rooms. Minneapolis Journal; *Womenkind*, 27 April 1901.

Because many of the artists who maintained studios there also were teachers or members or leaders of various local arts organizations, the building facilitated a spirited exchange of ideas within these groups. Among its prominent tenants, for example, was Robert Koehler, who had moved to Minneapolis as the new director of the Minneapolis School of Fine Arts in 1892 and who had founded the Art League in 1897.⁹ Following Koehler's arrival, Burt Harwood, an instructor at the same school and studio tenant in the "bandbox," served tea from a Russian samovar on a regular basis, providing an occasion for local artists to gather informally at the end of each week. The Russian tea tradition survived into the early 1900s under the auspices of two other studio occupants, Elisabeth A. Chant and Margarethe E. Heisser, both of whom were early and active members of the city's local Arts and Crafts Society. At an October 1899 opening reception for an exhibition of their own work, tea was served in rooms adjoining Chant and Heisser's studio, namely those of the Art League. In November of that year, still within the same building, the Arts and Crafts Society of Minneapolis met to plan the coming year's work.¹⁰ The building, therefore, functioned as an informal "clearing house" for arts information, where those concerned with the community's need for craft instruction as well as professional studio and exhibition space could gather, providing a forum for the discussion of contemporary social and aesthetic issues at the same time.

When Koehler took over his post as director of the Minneapolis School of Fine Arts in 1893, the school offered classes in "industrial art," which included instruction in the theory of handicraft, but with little accompanying workshop experience. St. Paul, too, felt the pressure to provide more applied arts training for public school teachers and members of the community. In 1895, St. Paul's school board had expanded course offerings in manual

training and separated those courses from the core curriculum. The board also created the new, co-educational Mechanic Arts High School, which offered four-year courses emphasizing art, craft, shop, drawing, and domestic science.¹¹ By the turn of the century, however, it was attracting more students than could be comfortably accommodated in existing studio and workshop facilities.

It is evident that the pressure for more applied arts training was not solely a Twin Cities phenomenon. State-wide support for the movement led to the formation of the Minnesota State Art Society in 1903. The society sought "to advance the interest of fine arts, to develop the influence of art in education, and to foster the introduction of art in manufacture." Minnesota was recognized around the country for its innovation in promoting a state-wide art program.¹² The demolition of the "Bandbox" studios in 1903 left the downtown Minneapolis art community in need not only of individual studio space, but of a center, a place for both formal and informal meetings. At the same time, the demand for applied art courses was growing. A popular course in decorative design was begun in 1899 at the Minneapolis School for Fine Arts. By the early twentieth century, the more specific studio needs of the school had become acute as well.¹³

In the 1890s, as local schools were struggling to meet a growing demand for art and craft training, a series of small associations were addressing the different, if related aesthetic and social interests of local women. The Chalk and Chisel Club—the name reflects its formation as a merger of woodcarvers and designers—began humbly with a handwritten note dated 5 January 1895. In the note, Gertrude J. Leonard invited Nellie Trufant to a meeting at Leonard's home "to consider the formation of a club of ladies for study in wood-carving and design."¹⁴ Membership grew to between twelve and fifteen women. The articles of the club's constitution reflected arts and crafts ideals of mutual support, education, and the exhibition of hand-crafted objects. There were monthly meetings and an annual November exhibition, in which all members were expected to participate. Some of their programs were quite ambitious. An early handwritten agenda for one year of monthly meetings, for example, lists the art, architecture, and design of France, Italy and England as topics. The 1895-96 agenda featured programs on historic furniture—Gothic; Moresque; the Renaissance in Italy, Germany, France, and the Netherlands; and Louis XVI, Empire, Tudor, Stuart, Sheraton and Colonial styles. Meetings in 1897-98 focused on flower varieties as themes, with the lecturer discussing the use of particular flowers in ornament and decorative design.¹⁵

In November 1898, the Chalk and Chisel Club sponsored Minnesota's first exhibition of arts and crafts. The results were unexpectedly gratifying. Of the eighty-two exhibitors, thirty were Minnesotans. Two members exhibited in the cabinet work and wood carving section: Gertrude Leonard (writing desk, stand, tabouret) and Mary Helmick (colonial mirror, jewel casket). Elizabeth (Mrs. F. G.) Hol-

brook, Adeline T. Gates, Mary Moulton Cheney, and Hope McDonald had entries in designs and book decoration, metal, glass and casts. The quality and geographic distribution of work in the exhibition attests to the standards Chalk and Chisel Club members set for themselves from the beginning. Exhibitors included Otto Zahn of Memphis (bookbinding and leather work), Arthur G. Grinell of Bedford, Massachusetts (cabinet work and wood carving), Samuel Bridge Dean of Boston (ceramics), the Rookwood Pottery Co., Charles Volkmar (ceramics), Grueby Faience Co. and Dedham Pottery, Eleanor Klapp of Chicago (jewelry), and The Deerfield Society of Blue and White Needlework (embroideries and textiles).¹⁶

The growing community interest in the applied arts led Chalk and Chisel Club members to revise their by-laws and reorganize under the name of Arts and Crafts Society of Minneapolis in 1899.¹⁷ The principal objective of this new organization was "to encourage the production of artistic handicraft, to establish mutual and helpful relations between designer and craftsman, and to stimulate the appreciation of harmony and fitness in design."¹⁸ At this point the society began to admit associate members who were not designers or craftspeople. This is the first evidence of the pragmatic, populist principles that would shape the Arts and Crafts movement's development in Minnesota, distinguishing it from others in the United States. The newly named society, which continued to be comprised solely of women, chose to study manuscripts, printing, and bookbinding at its first meetings, with special focus on recent developments in bookmaking in America.¹⁹

In the fall of 1904, eleven local women, many of whom were members of the Arts and Crafts Society of Minneapolis, founded the Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis. Beginning with the Chalk and Chisel Club, formal arts and crafts organizations had been active in the city for about nine years, which is the basis for Minnesota's claim of having



Chest by Mary A. Helmick. The International Studio, vol. 28, 1906.



1900 Minneapolis Arts & Crafts Show. *Brush and Pencil*, vol. 6, June 1900.

the oldest arts and crafts society in the nation. Grace Margaret Kiess served as president until the newest organization was formally incorporated in March 1905. An announcement in *The Craftsman* for May 1905 described the motivating factors:

The [Handicraft] Guild came into existence last fall to meet a pressing need for craft classes especially suited to requirements for training teachers of the public schools in handicrafts. There was also a recognized want of such training by others and there was no salesroom for artistic craft projects nor any means of bringing the work of the local craftsmen to the notice of the buying public. The project of a salesroom in which a stock of articles could be kept and orders taken was heartily approved and furthered by the local Arts and Crafts Society, which is one of the oldest and most successful in the United States.²⁰

Put simply, the guild integrated the resources of the Arts and Crafts Society of Minneapolis with the needs of the arts education community.

The subject of the position of women in craft production was not addressed explicitly in statements issued by the Chalk and Chisel Club, nor by any of the various Minnesota arts and crafts groups. It is clear, however, that the movement's focus on the individual worker's needs for social interaction, recognition, and a sense of personal accomplishment, in addition to wages and security, spoke to women in an unusually forceful way. The history of the

Handicraft Guild suggests that it functioned differently from most business or educational institutions run by men at the time in ways that might justifiably be designated as feminist. Rather than a clear-cut administrative hierarchy which pursued fixed institutional goals, for example, the guild more closely resembled a network of individuals whose interests—in crafts, education, and personal development—stretched out into the community in many different directions, merging to produce thoughtfully designed and constructed objects and programs. The organization itself was dynamic, constantly adapting to the changing interests and needs of a larger community, even to the point of surrendering its independent identity altogether, in 1918, to become part of the University of Minnesota.

The founders and most active guild members were professional women—artists, educators, entrepreneurs. The majority of those with the longest and most distinguished records apparently resolved the conflict between marriage and career by not marrying at all; some who did marry discontinued their active participation in the guild at that point. No member, however, defined her career primarily in terms of the guild. The staff consisted of trained and experienced artists and teachers who simultaneously held positions in other, usually educational institutions, or operated their own small businesses. The guild, in short, provided established professionals with an opportunity to expand and extend their work in new directions, to experi-

ence economic independence, to find camaraderie and mutual support, to exchange ideas with other artisans, and to experience personal and artistic growth. As such it attracted participants at various stages of different careers and served their needs in a wide range of ways.²¹

Emma Roberts, for example, the guild's founder and its president between 1906 and 1917, was a teacher in the Minneapolis public school system where she supervised drawing and art appreciation for twenty-four years. She was primarily concerned with the introduction of an aesthetic dimension into everyday life and saw the products of the arts and crafts movement as a way to achieve this goal. She both taught and wrote textbooks. In her guild work she pursued the same goals, although largely among older, more advanced students, many of whom planned to become or already were teachers.

Mary Moulton Cheney, whose educational philosophy closely paralleled that of Roberts, was prominent in the Arts and Crafts movement in Minnesota well before the guild was founded. She was a graphic designer of national reputation, a teacher—and later director—at the Minneapolis School of Fine Arts, and the proprietor/partner in a business specializing in craft work. The volume and diversity of Cheney's activity in design, sales, exhibition, teaching, and administration made her a key figure in the formation of the arts community in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The guild offered transitional artistic and occupational opportunities to its members. To its president from 1905 to 1906, the interior designer Mary Linton Bookwalter, the guild provided an early glimpse into the entrepreneurial possibilities of design work. Bookwalter later moved to New York City, where she was instrumental in the design, financing, and construction of important early apartment cooperatives. Already well known as an artist and china painter before coming to the guild as a student, Henrietta Barclay Paist moved from a fairly conservative, realist style of painting to a flattened, patterned, "modern" one in the course of her studies and work. Gladys Pattee adapted her guild training not only to innovative teaching methods at the public school level, but eventually—in the wake of World War I—to the development of a new occupational therapy program.

THE GUILD HOUSE

The guild was housed initially on the fourth floor of the Dayton Building at 710 Nicollet Avenue and functioned primarily as a permanent exhibition and showroom for handmade items by craftspeople from around the United States. Limited courses were offered in clay modeling, leather work, and Irish embroidery. By December 1904 there was already a growing demand for more courses, and it became clear that additional space had to be sought elsewhere. A lease was acquired for a large residence at 926 2nd Avenue. By March 1905 the guild had moved in and



Handicraft Guild fireplace. Construction Details, August 1914, p. 59. Photograph courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.



Handicraft Guild auditorium, 10th Street and Marquette Avenue, about 1910. Photograph courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

a pottery class was in session as remodeling was still underway. Exhibition and lecture rooms were at the front of the building; rear rooms were used for clay and metal work. Studios for artists and craftworkers were located on the second and third floors.²²

In July 1905 the guild was less than a year old, but its directors announced that they would begin work to acquire yet another new facility. In February 1906, the officers announced the selection of a site and plans to build a permanent home for the guild. Minneapolis philanthropist Joseph R. Kingman provided the capital for the construction of the building. A local architect of national reputa-

tion, William Channing Whitney, agreed to design the multifunction facility. By November 1907 a jubilant group of officers and staff moved into the guild's new home at 89 S. 10th Street, which was equipped to meet the needs not only of the guild, but those of others in the art community, local craftworkers, educators, shopkeepers, and charitable groups as well.²³

The three-story brick and stone Georgian revival structure at 89 S. 10th Street offered precisely what the Minneapolis art community had sought for more than a decade. The large auditorium could accommodate lectures, general assemblies, exhibitions, and concerts. The long sales/display room featured a fireplace decorated with guild tiles. There was a luncheon and tea room, a book shop, work shops, classrooms, stock rooms for supplies, and studios for craftworkers, designers, and painters, as well as shops and offices for interior designers. Writing in 1908, Elisabeth Chant expressed her surprise and admiration at what the guild had accomplished in a short time. It had demonstrated how "art applied to everyday uses can really be made to pay; that even here, in a Western city, a corporation built on lines that demand the cultivated tastes of the public for its support has flourished and grown important; and that without large capital or financial backing it has proved successful in a business as well as an artistic way." At long last guild founders were able to implement their founding goals in this new facility which included an attractive sales area "for the advancement of industrial art interests [and] to furnish complete training for students desirous of becoming Craftsmen, Designers, and Teachers."²⁴

Among the special facilities in the new building was a pottery studio. Judson T. Webb, a pottery instructor at the Chicago Art Institute School, was first engaged to come to Minneapolis in April 1905 and supervise the installation of



Elizabeth Augusta Chant (1865–1947) in her studio at the Handicraft Guild, about 1908. Collection of Sherron R. Biddle, Boiling Springs, Penn. Photograph courtesy of St. John's Museum of Art, Wilmington, N.C.

pottery wheels similar to those used in Chicago. Due to the expense of professional power wheels, both the Minneapolis and Chicago schools initially used wheels powered by sewing machine treadles. Two kilns were installed, a small one for biscuit ware (the initial firing prior to glazing) and a larger one for firing glazed pieces. The guild's decision to use local Red Wing clay for its pottery production was likely reached in consultation with Webb who was a proponent of the use of American clays.²⁵

The guild house itself may have articulated arts and crafts principles as eloquently as any of the organization's members. Beamed ceilings, dark rafters, and wainscoting details combined with warm brown wall and yellow ceiling tones to produce a subtle, welcoming atmosphere that promoted the exchange of ideas. The floor plan relegated noisy shop areas to the back of the building. The building quickly became a center for artists, craftspeople, and students across the metropolitan area. The Woman's Club of Minneapolis held its weekly meetings there; visiting artists spoke and exhibited their work in the guild auditorium and galleries; specialists were invited to lecture on topics related to the guild's coursework. In January 1910 May Morris, daughter of William Morris (British founder of the Arts and Crafts movement), was a featured speaker at the guild during her exhibition tour of the United States.²⁶

The guild facility also offered studio space to artists, designers, and craftspeople working in various media, further strengthening its relationship to the art community. Over the years those spaces were occupied by Elizabeth Norris, Susan Christian, bookbinders Winifred Cole and Edith Griffith, leatherworkers Nelbert Murphy and Margaret Sheardown, photographers Margaret Sheridan and Ger-



Handicraft Guild sales area. Construction Details, August 1914, p. 59. Photograph courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

trude E. Mann, rare book dealer Edmund D. Brooks, the decorating studio of Gustav F. Weber, portraitist Hildur Peterson-Frey, jeweler Ida Pell Conklin, and painter Elisabeth Chant. The last Saturday of the month served as a day to informally visit studios and join a gathering in the guild tea room. More than fifty years later, the guild building remained a center of activity for local craftworkers. Commercial artists, a violin maker, fashion designers, and cabinetmakers had successful showrooms and workshops in the guild building as late as 1973. They were drawn there, as fashion designer Agnes Reed said, because it felt like home.²⁷



Ernest Batchelder. Photograph courtesy of Robert Winter and Alan Batchelder.

THE PROGRAM

In keeping with the broad ideals of the arts and crafts movement, the guild fostered an appreciation for fine materials, a respect for skilled work, and for cooperative effort of its members. In translating these ideals, first articulated in Europe, to the practical, socially liberal young American city of Minneapolis, emphasis shifted from the training of individual artists to the training of teachers who could disseminate the ideas as broadly as possible.

Because the guild initially functioned as an extension or supplement to existing educational programs, a summer school represented its first programmatic focus. To direct its first *Summer School of Design Applied to Crafts*, held in the summer of 1905, the guild hired Ernest A. Batchelder of Throop Polytechnic Institute, Pasadena, California (now Caltech). Batchelder believed in a universality of

good design that could be fostered by craftworkers, not theorists, who would then teach the applied arts. He recommended the analysis of exemplary objects as a way of understanding the need for order, for clear and coherent expression, and for the effective functioning of a work. Batchelder felt that the true strength of design could be found in the structural relationship of its various elements. One of his simplest statements spoke most eloquently of his perspective on the goals of a true craftsman. "We try for order and hope for beauty."²⁸

Batchelder presented four aims for the summer school program: "1. To stimulate the imagination. 2. To impart sufficient technical skill to develop the limitations and possibilities of leather, metal and clay as means of expression. 3. To induce pupils to think in terms of lines, areas and tones. 4. To lead the individual expression of an idea in accordance with sound principles."²⁹ The first summer school session drew eighty students and much favorable comment. Batchelder agreed to return for the summer of 1906 before leaving to study at industrial art and technical schools in England and Europe.³⁰ After the first successful summer program, the guild added two faculty members to its staff in the fall of 1906. Harry S. Michie, a 1902 design graduate of Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, who also spent a year at the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts in London, joined the faculty as a metalwork specialist. Ida Pell Conklin, a 1906 Pratt graduate in jewelry and metal-chasing, began a long affiliation with the guild as jewelry instructor.³¹ In December of the same year, the guild participated in the "Fifth Annual Exhibition of Original Designs for Decorations and Examples of Art Crafts Having Distinct Artistic Merit" at the Art Institute of Chicago. Guild students and faculty went on in the years ahead to show their work regularly in Chicago, Boston, Detroit, New York, Los Angeles, Kansas City, Philadelphia, and Fargo, North Dakota, as well as throughout Minnesota. Handicraft Guild work was shown in 1907 exhibitions organized by the Brooklyn Handicrafters, the New York Ceramic Arts group, and the Eastern & Western Drawing & Manual Training Teachers' Associations meeting in Cleveland.

Despite poor health in the previous year, Batchelder returned to direct the summer school program in 1907. There were ninety-eight students registered for the course, half of whom came from outside the Twin Cities, including some from as far away as Oregon, Ohio, and Missouri. Determined efforts were made to encourage a broad-based student body. The guild advertised its program regularly in such publications as *The Craftsman*, *International Studio*, and *School Education*, and the summer school brochure offered addresses of boarding facilities in Minneapolis. Many of the students were established professionals, already engaged in teaching, designing, or crafts production, who sought to improve their skills and knowledge under the stimulating curriculum designed by Batchelder and the other well-known instructors.³² Classes at the guild in 1907 included metalwork, jewelry, leather, pottery, book-bind-



Metalwork executed by the Handicraft Guild. *The International Studio*, vol. 28, 1906.

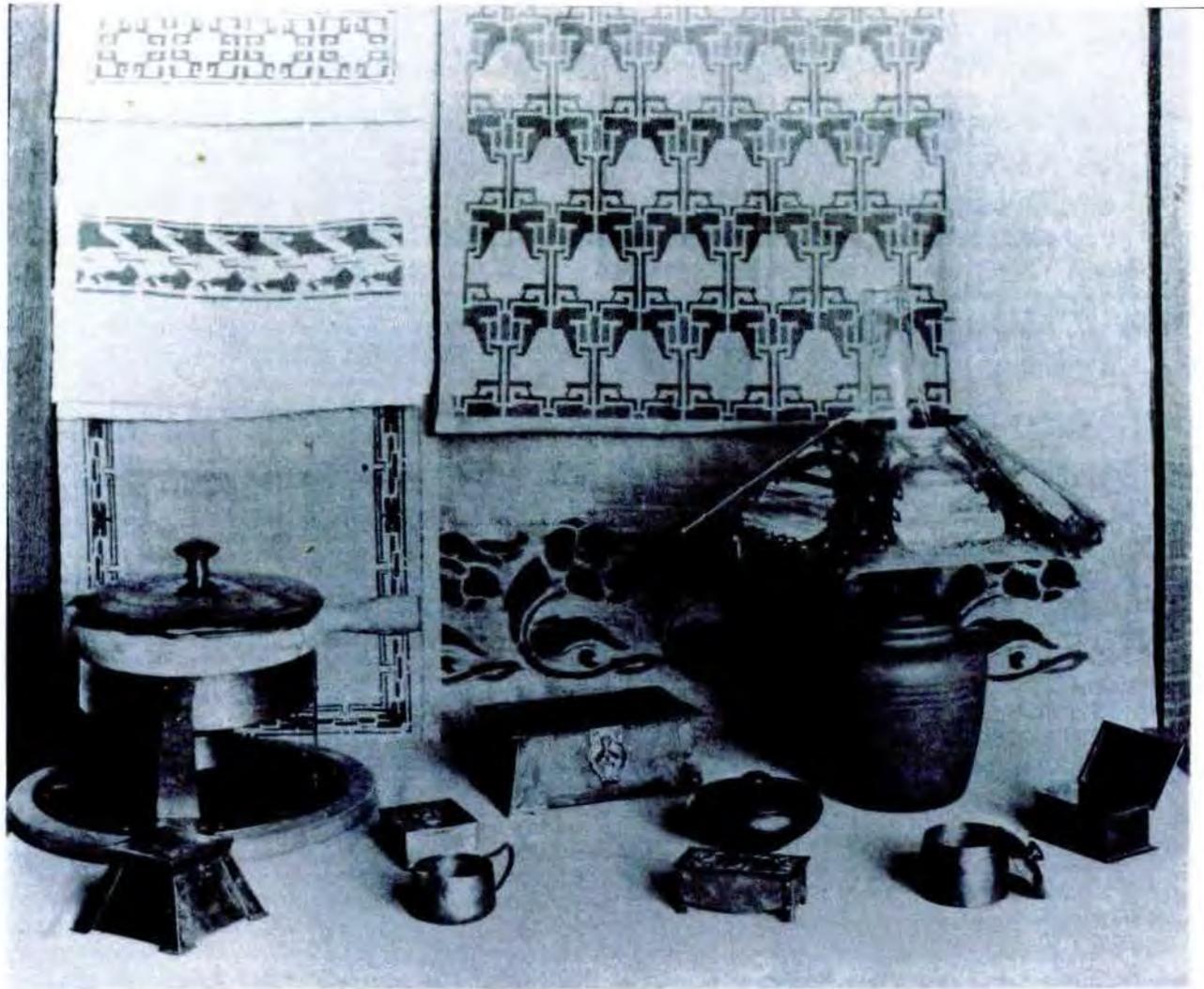
ing, woodworking, wood carving, wood-block printing, and a special course in watercolor painting. The guild also advertised facilities for the firing and glazing of pottery and sold modeling tools, clay and leather tools, and "whole skins."³³

Batchelder returned to direct the summer school of 1908, and in December of that year it was announced that he would also return in February 1909 for his first tenure as director of design for the winter term. He remained in Minneapolis for the 1909 summer school session as well. Batchelder's fame as an authority on design and composition had grown considerably by this point. He had served as director of the art department at Throop, as president of the Pacific Manual Training Association, and as a design instructor at the Harvard summer school. His regular contributions in *The Craftsman* and his book, *Principles of Design*, were read and debated across America. When, at the conclusion of the 1909 courses, he ended his formal association, the guild lost an important asset as well as the inspiration of a fine theorist, artist, and designer.³⁴

With the summer school course of 1910, the guild entered a new phase under the directorship of Maurice Irwin Flagg of Boston, the second of the three most influential personalities to direct the Guild's educational efforts. At this time the guild building and its various programs continued to be managed by its corporate officers: Emma Roberts, Florence D. Willets, and Florence Wales. In September 1910, the normal art department was added to the curriculum to "train students to fill positions as teachers in public

or private schools, and give them a knowledge of handicraft which may lead to professions." By 1912 the guild was advertising its expanded programs as the "School of Design, Handicraft, and Normal Art," with diplomas awarded at the completion of the two-year course. New courses also were offered in other subjects, including stained glass, interior decoration, art in advertising, costume design, and illustration.³⁵ In 1912 Maurice Irwin Flagg also accepted the part-time position of director of the Minnesota State Art Society. Flagg's work at the State Art Society consumed more and more of his time, until he finally found it necessary to leave his position at the guild in 1914. He was replaced briefly by Mary C. Scovel.³⁶

The arts and crafts movement in Minnesota reached its peak of recognition and acceptance around 1914–15. At the same time, however, the impact of World War I and the expanded roles of the Minnesota State Art Society and the Minneapolis School of Art contributed to its gradual decline. Ruth Raymond, who was hired in 1914 as a design and composition instructor and who took over as principal the following year, became the guild's last administrator. In 1916 Emma Roberts and Florence Willets, who had been serving respectively as guild president and secretary-treasurer almost since the organization's formation, felt they could no longer manage the administration of both the building and the program. At their suggestion, discussions began with the University of Minnesota for the possible transfer of the guild program. From information gathered in public schools and normal schools state-wide, there was



Varied works from the Handicraft Guild. Palette and Bench, vol. 1, October 1908, p. 24.



1914 junior class, Handicraft Guild. Photograph courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.



Ruth Raymond. *Who's Who among Minnesota Women*, 1924, p. 265.

a clear need for a degree program to train special teachers of art and music. In 1917 a two-year negotiation began to have the guild absorbed as the University of Minnesota's art education department. After this was accomplished, Raymond stayed on as head of the new department at the university until her retirement in 1947.⁴⁷

THE WORK

The work produced by the guild incorporated many of the formal and technical traditions now identified with the Arts and Crafts movement. Identifiably handworked pots, exposed furniture joints, hammer marks, and visible, oversized rivets on metalwork asserted the superiority of hand-made objects. In conscious contrast to mechanized production that masked all evidence of construction, the aim of all arts and crafts artists was to make process a

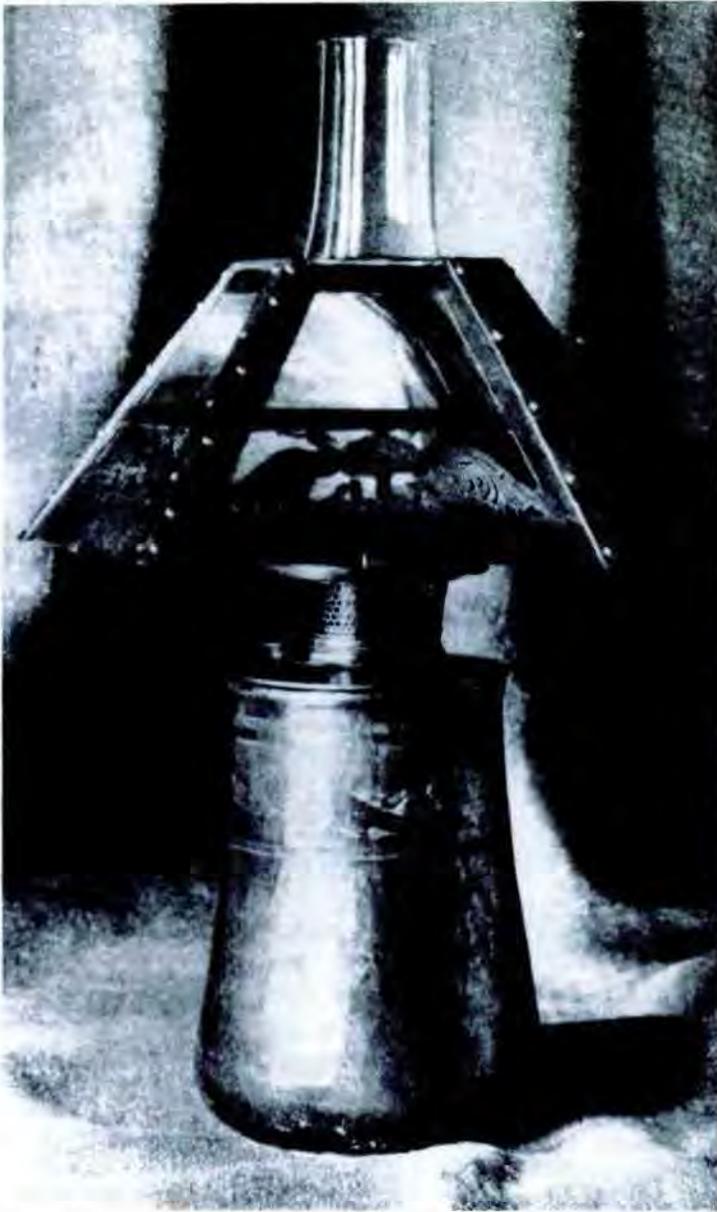
component of design. Despite the accessibility of the sophisticated work of Douglas Donaldson, James H. Winn, or Batchelder, many guild products retained a quality of stark simplicity and an absence of studied decorative elements. Emphasis was as much on process as on product. A successful student could acquire some level of technical skill, and would experience the satisfaction of working with his or her hands, recreating the experience with and for others.

To the extent that a prevailing aesthetic or design philosophy is discernible in guild work, it seems most closely linked to Japanese precedent. From the perspective of nineteenth-century romanticism, of which the philosophy of the Arts and Crafts movement was an extension, Japan was honored as a nation which had kept its identity against the force of Western industrialization. Japanese culture was seen as conservative, against innovation, a quality championed by romantics seeking to escape the machine production of the industrial age. Compared to the American style of life, obsessed with consumerism and wasteful spending, the Japanese appeared to live simply and well. They also did not separate and elevate "art" to a special place over "craft," as was the case in Western culture.³⁸

Art periodicals were the most pervasive tool for spreading Japanese images and ideas. *Japonisme*, the term broadly designating this late nineteenth-century Western enthusiasm for things Japanese, contributed to the popularity of certain birds, flowers, insects, trees, and fish, especially carp, as design motifs in America and Europe at the turn of the century. The Japanese sensitivity to the look of specific seasonal and weather conditions also was emulated. The "cracked-ice" or "crackled-glaze" motif had a significant impact on ceramic and graphic work. Many of these qualities (e.g., the juxtaposition of movement against static natural backgrounds, bird's-eye viewpoints, irregular division of space, and flatter images with absent or altered perspectives) inspired Western artists of the time. Ernest Batchelder, the guild's most influential teacher, was among them.

Batchelder's writings emphasized the need for American craft artists to develop a national design vocabulary that was not based on Western historical tradition. His writings and his instruction emphasized that good design required a unity of all elements. The successful solution to any design problem amalgamated decisions about line, composition, and color and the strength of any work lay in the structural relationship of these various elements. Batchelder was greatly influenced by Japanese design, viewing it as a unification of nature and abstract form. He admired the Japanese artist who did not replicate nature, but rather expressed an idea of it. Consequently, although he encouraged his own students to study nature, he gave greater emphasis to the use of natural materials, naturally fashioned; iron should look like iron and copper like copper, and neither should look like draped silk or a dragonfly's wing.

Other influential guild members had a strong commitment to Japanese art as well. At her shop, The Artercraft Shop: Sign of the Bay Tree, Mary Moulton Cheney intro-



Peacock lamp designed and executed by Douglas Donaldson. *Palette and Bench*, vol. 2, February 1910, p. 111.

duced prints imported from Japan as early as 1901, and she regularly carried the prints of contemporary artist, Sogo Matsumoto. She also copyrighted illuminated designs of her own that featured sparrows in flight and human figures reminiscent of those in Japanese block prints. The peacock and the phoenix—two popular icons of American *japonisme*—were hallmarks of her graphic design. These motifs were used not only by Cheney, but by Batchelder, Twin Cities china painter Henrietta Barclay Paist, and other students and instructors at the guild and other Twin Cities arts and craft schools.

Bertha Lum, who trained at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago before marrying and moving to Minneapolis in 1893, taught wood-block printing at the guild in 1905,

1906, and 1915. Her early fascination with Japanese wood-block prints lasted a lifetime and led to several visits to and apprenticeships in Japan between 1893 and 1912. In Japan, the production of a color woodcut print was divided among several artists, each specializing in one particular component of creation and execution. Lum, in contrast, mastered the entire process. Her prints, often based on the work of other Japanese artists or the heroines of Japanese folklore and legends, so impressed her Japanese teachers and fellow artists that she was the only Westerner (and the only woman) whose work was shown at a Tokyo exhibition in 1912.³⁹ Lum's regular incorporation of the Torii Gate image, her distorted landscape perspectives, use of silhouette, and the interior light of her color woodcuts is echoed in the work of other guild instructors and students.⁴⁰

The Minneapolis community's exposure and sensitivity to *japonisme* were further advanced by the local interior designer John Scott Bradstreet. The galleries of his Crafts-house extended the walls of the guild's classroom, where students were exposed to Oriental art, furnishings, and Bradstreet's own *jin-di-sugi* design contribution to the arts



Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis. Copper hood detail of the downstairs fireplace in the Hewitt residence, Minneapolis, Minn. Photograph by Gary Mortensen and Robert Fogt.



Wall light fixture with same piercework motifs as Wycroft fixtures and Burtha Lum print. *Palette and Bench*, vol. 2, February 1910, p. 109.

and crafts movement. A column in a local publication, *Keith's Magazine*, describes Bradstreet's exaggerated Japanese-inspired furniture designs with an appreciation for both his innovative use of Eastern design motifs and the creation of a unique decorative style.⁴¹

In the crafted products of the guild, elaborate detail was the exception rather than the rule. The graphic, flat nature of guild designs, even of most of its repoussé metalwork, encouraged more abstract, less representational imagery, particularly evident in pierced metalwork. The guild's design vocabulary was reminiscent of the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the women embroiderers of the Glasgow School, and at least two popular regional publications discussed and illustrated Glasgow School work. Batchelder's travels to Europe no doubt exposed guild members to the Glasgow School's innovative design principles.⁴²

The best-known products of guild students and faculty are either in metal or ceramic. The ceramic forms are predominantly functional and include vases, pots, candlesticks, bookends, trivets, flower frogs, tiles, lamp bases, ink wells, wall sconces, and covered vessels.

Each of the three primary processes of potting—building, throwing, and molding—were utilized at the guild. Although there are examples of thin-walled, wheel-turned pots, the majority of surviving examples are thick walled, sometimes with rough applied designs or stamp work and usually coated with heavy, blended glazes.⁴³ These slab or coiled vessels appear to have been created primarily as instructional pieces and apparently were not earmarked for retail sale. The molded versus hand-built pieces are more appealing, their success relying on the glazing skill of the student or instructor and the quality of the original mold.

Red Wing clay was brought directly from the beds fifty miles from the Twin Cities, then kneaded and formed into soft bricks of a workable size for the potters' use. Full-scale working drawings were prepared before work on a vessel was begun. Decorating and finishing were done entirely by hand. All guild pots were biscuit-fired, glazed and fired again.⁴⁴ The rustic quality of most guild pottery, which did not always lend itself well to vessel forms, was better suited to decorator tiles and household ornaments. Residential work by guild craftworkers seems to have focused on metal light fixtures and fireplace faces. Guild fireplaces in particular have a scale, texture, and color that expressed the American arts and crafts ideal of incorporating craft production into the heart of the newly simplified and cozy home.⁴⁵

In a 1905 feature article of the *Minneapolis Journal*, society editor Martha Scott Anderson described the guild's pottery-making process and suggested that a new art industry might emerge from the pottery work of guild students. But the small number of extant guild ceramics and the few interiors executed by the organization indicate that their commissions were limited to a small group of committed patrons.⁴⁶

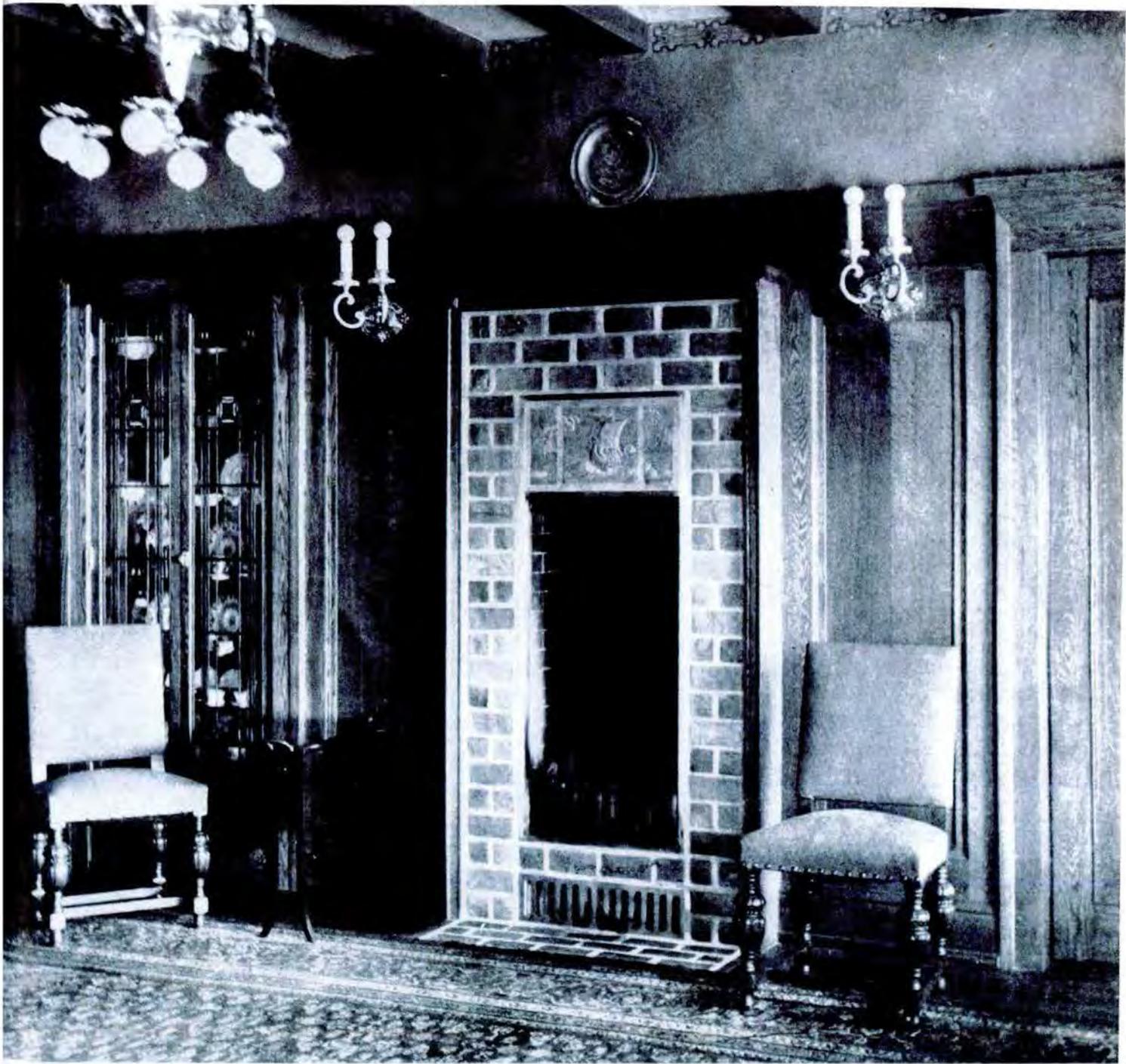
Of the surviving handicrafts produced by the guild,



Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis. Ceramics. Steve Schoneck, Rolf Grudem, Nancy M. Rose, and the Rev. William Gamber Collections. Photograph by Gary Mortensen and Robert Fogt.



Women in a pottery class at the Handicraft Guild. 1916-1917 Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis Session Booklet, p. 21.



Fireplace from the M. E. J. Couper residence, Minneapolis. Construction Details, vol. 6, August 1914, p. 61.

metalwork is the most prevalent and often the most successful from a design and functional perspective. These objects represent nearly every metalwork technique and function, everything from hammered light fixtures, to cut spoons, to enameled desk sets. Early metalwork courses at the guild

included only hammering and etching. Chasing and braising were soon added. By 1912-13 courses offered both beginners and advanced workers instruction in the finer points of constructing and decorating trays, bowls, spoons, desk



1916-17 pottery display. 1916-1917 Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis Session Booklet, p. 6.

sets, lamp shades, and other items. Among the techniques taught were hammering, riveting, soldering, etching, saw piercing, raising, repoussé, and enameling.⁴⁷ Surviving guild metalwork suggests that instructors and students were heavily influenced by work done at Pratt Institute and Bradley Polytechnic and by artisans and educators such as Ernest Batchelder, Ida Pell Conklin, Harry S. Michie, Augustus F. Rose, Arthur Frank Payne, his student Harold L. Boyle, James Winn, and Douglas Donaldson. The form and finish of many surviving examples of metalwork suggest that spinning also was taught. Metal blanks seem to have been purchased elsewhere and used by the guild for pierced work and other decorative techniques.

In 1910, *Palette and Bench* featured an article by guild metalwork instructor, Douglas Donaldson, "The Making of Metal Lampshades." The oriental decorative elements of these pierced and repoussé metal shades suggest that while a clean, rectilinear style prevailed in American arts and crafts design, metalwork at the guild featured decoration that flared and curved, often resembling Japanese pagoda-like forms.⁴⁸ The balance of positive and negative space and the frequent incorporation of peacocks and other exotic birds in metalwork bear further witness to guild members' admiration for Japanese precedent.

An undated brochure succinctly describes the guild's view of the educational and aesthetic value of metalwork. The basic but elegant forms developed as raised bowls, nut sets, and pierced spoons are among the guild's most representative and finest work.

A metal bowl should be made from the flat material. The metal is annealed again, fashioned over stakes and gradually coaxed into shape until the ideal of the maker is expressed in the finished piece.

Such an article demands our respect and admiration, and possesses a commercial, as well as an artistic value, far exceeding a machine made piece."⁴⁹



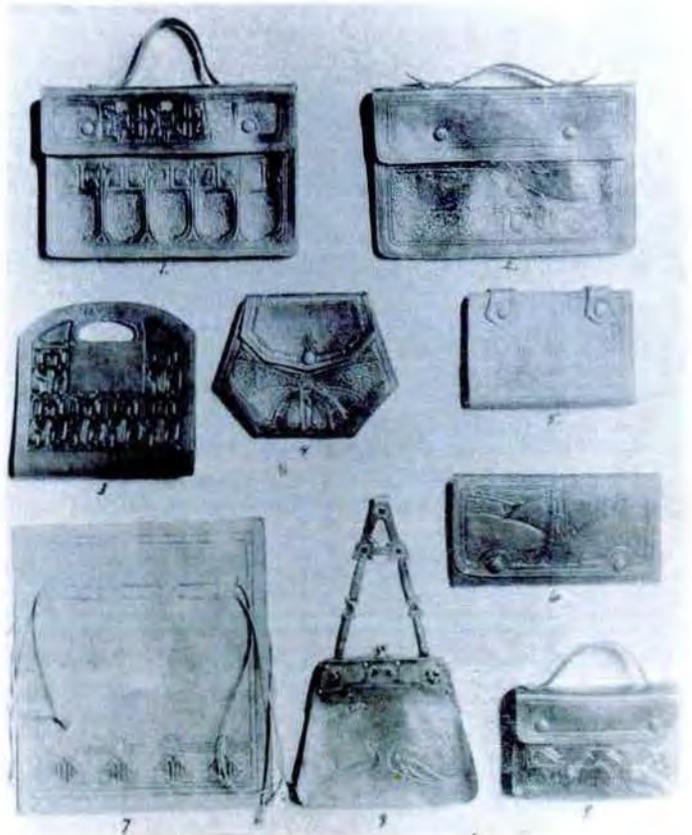
Group of metalwork from the Handicraft Guild. *Arts and Decoration*, vol. 2, September 1912, p. 399.



Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis. Brass etched tray and picture frame, brass and copper match holder. Steve Schoneck and David Matchan Collections. Photograph by Gary Mortensen and Robert Fogt.



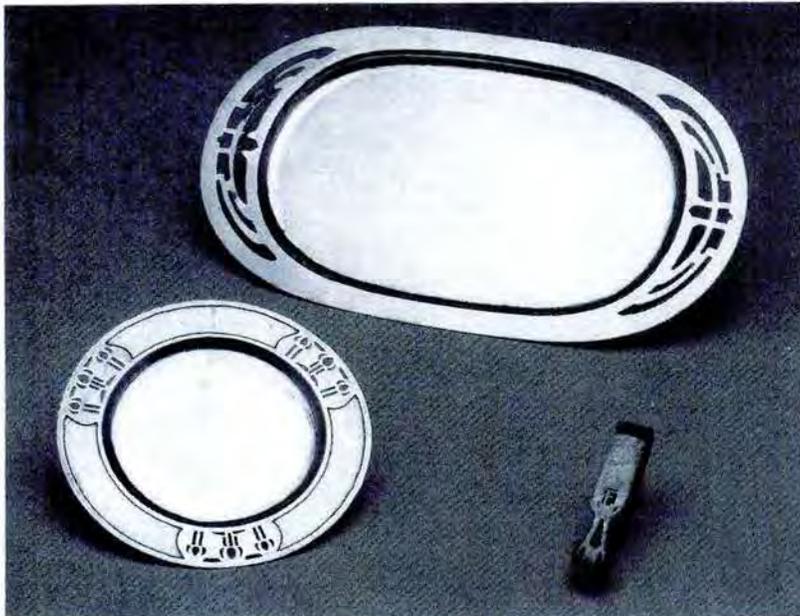
Lamp fixtures executed by the Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis. Palette and Bench, vol. 2, February 1910, p. 111.



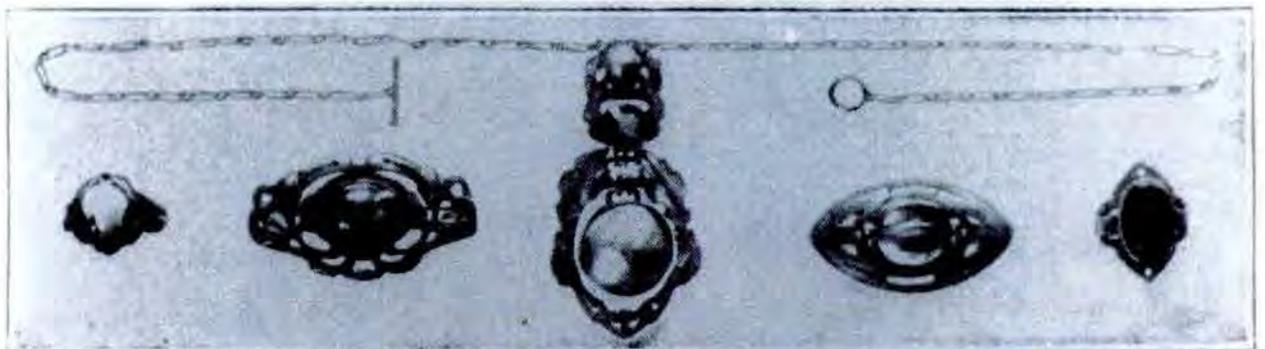
Handicraft Guild tooled leather works. Palette and Bench, February 1909, p. 119.



Handicraft Guild metal shop. 1916–1917 Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis Session Booklet, p. 8.



Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis. Silver plated tray, calling card tray, and sugar tongs. Minnesota Historical Society and Steve Schoneck Collections. Photograph by Gary Mortensen and Robert Fogt.



Handicraft Guild jewelry. 1916–1917 Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis Session Booklet, p. 19.

Few examples remain of guild jewelry, leather work, stenciling, woodblock printing, weaving, basket making, and graphic design. However, a 1909 issue of *Palette and Bench* featured a photograph of nine pieces of guild leather work and identified their makers, each of them a woman.⁵⁰

CONCLUSION

Although varied in size, goals, and membership, American arts and crafts organizations at the turn of the century shared a deep-seated antipathy to the social impact of industrialization, finding expression for a sense of personal and cultural loss, a fragmentation of experience occasioned by industrial progress, and the hope that life could be restored to a more fulfilling, more natural state. In Europe, this hope was conveyed effectively through reference to a medieval past, the time before machine production played so decisive a part in everyday life. In America, however, with scant memory of a pre-industrial past, the hope was more appropriately formulated in terms of the present and future. Embedded in the experience of craft technique and process (although, with characteristic pragmatism, often willing to incorporate machine work), the ideal of a full, humane life was to be preached as widely as possible, enough to augment and even, at times, displace efficiency and economy, the prevailing values of modern industrial society.

Although both Europeans and Americans rejected the loss of individuality implicit in industrial production, American arts and crafts organizations more often sought broad social change as opposed to moral reform. The successful craft product required hard-won skills and the personal engagement of a particular craftsman, and it invariably demanded a great deal of time. Arts and crafts guilds, schools, and individual artists were certainly not averse to selling hand-made products at a profit, however. On the contrary, each sale, particularly of objects for everyday use, became a small victory of the hand-made over the industrially produced.⁵¹ More broadly, this represented a symbolic victory of a utopian ideal over the unpalatable realities of life in a modern industrial society.

In its determined pragmatism, in its populist sentiments, and in its strong educational emphasis, the Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis was an exemplary American arts and crafts organization. In acute awareness of the larger arts community in which it functioned, however, it may well be unique. Although the guild focused its utopian efforts on change in individuals, the goal would be achieved through education. This small and relatively short-lived organization effectively matched its members' interests with a series of recognized community needs. The guild fulfilled these needs, went on to continuously redefine its own programs for more than a decade, and finally accommodated itself within the structure of a large state university. Then, it quietly and permanently stepped aside. As we approach the turn of the next century, it becomes possible to see the guild not only as the basis for Minnesota's claim to a promi-

nent place in the international Arts and Crafts movement, but also as a model of resilience, responsiveness, and institutional modesty that demanded no monument and no tribute beyond the assurance that its ideals would be conveyed to students of the crafts for generations to come.

NOTES

1. Lionel Lambourne, *Utopian Craftsmen: The Arts and Crafts Movement from the Cotswolds to Chicago* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1980), 125–40.

2. Other institutionally affiliated arts and crafts associations include the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society, Throop Polytechnic Institute in Pasadena, Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, Newcomb Pottery at Sophie Newcomb Memorial College in New Orleans, the Mechanic Arts High School in St. Paul, the Minneapolis School of Fine Arts, and the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland.

3. These include the Furniture Shop of Arthur and Lucia Mathews in San Francisco, Charles Rohlf's Workshop in Buffalo, New York, Old Mission Kopper Kraft shops in San Jose and San Francisco, the Kalo Shop in Chicago, and the Shop of the Crafters in Cincinnati.

4. These include the Hartford Arts & Crafts Club, the Arts & Crafts League of Evansville (Illinois), The Arts & Handicrafts Guild of Greensboro (North Carolina), The Chicago Arts and Crafts Society, and the Handicraft Workers of Peterborough (New Hampshire).

5. Gardner C. Teall, "The Craftsman's Library," *House Beautiful* 12, no. 1 (June 1902): 18.

6. Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study in the Evolution of Institutions* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1899).

7. Eileen Boris, *Art and Labor: Ruskin, Morris and the Craftsman Ideal in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986): 48, 49; Thorstein Veblen, "Arts and Crafts," *The Journal of Political Economy* (December 1902–September 1903): 108–11.

8. "All Hand Work: The Chalk and Chisel Club Exhibition Opens To-Night," *Minneapolis Journal*, 16 November 1898, p. 6; "Arts and Crafts Exhibition: Formerly Opened by a Private View Last Night," 17 November 1898, p. 7; "At the 'Arts and Crafts': Book Lovers Go There to Rave," 18 November 1898. The exhibitions first sponsored in 1898 by the Chalk and Chisel Club of Minneapolis exposed Minnesota artists to a variety of handicrafts and inspired designers, architects, and artists to experiment with new materials and technologies. Local merchants began to stock Rookwood, Grueby fireplace tiles, Craftsman furniture, Kalo silver, Van Briggle pottery, Deerfield Society blue and white embroidery, and other fine crafts for this newly enlightened populace. Minnesotans were anxious to have local commercial access to such goods.

9. "Minneapolis Artists Lose a Landmark: The Old Studio on Hennepin was Most Intimately Identified with the Beginnings of Art in this City," *Minneapolis Journal*, 12 December 1903, p. 4; "Artists Planning a Studio Center," 24 September 1906, p. 5. Other tenants in the 1890s included Alexis Fournier, Mary Helmick, Rhoda Casterlin, and E. H. Center.

10. Martha Scott Anderson, "Two Young Women Artists and their Charming Studios: Miss Heisser and Miss Chant Work for the Encouragement of Art Interests—Some of their Recent Experiments," *Minneapolis Journal*, 10 March 1900.

11. St. Paul Department of Education, *A Course Book for the High Schools of St. Paul, Minnesota* (St. Paul, 1912–13): 64–68. Minnesota's public school applied arts programs were as sophisticated as some of the nationally established arts and crafts societies. Mechanic Arts High School students, for example, developed the color scheme and furniture design for the Minnesota Building at the St. Louis Universal Exposition of 1904. Half of the furniture was produced by Mechanic Arts students, the other half by students in Minneapolis high schools. The exhibition hall was critically reviewed in the *New York Staatszeitung*. Dr. M. Baumfield's review discussed the setting as "furniture in an independent variation of the Mission style, [which] harmonizes well in color [greens] with

the wood-work and a carpet of perfect design. The colored glass windows . . . are of great decorative value . . . well worth seeing." The exhibition won the gold medal. Support for the school sometimes came directly from the St. Paul community, as suggested in a report of The Woman's Civic League of St. Paul in that city's *Directory of Charitable and Benevolent Organizations* (1913). Organized in 1899, this league sponsored "Arts & Crafts" and industrial education exhibitions in 1901-2. The proceeds were used to purchase a year's supply of manual training supplies for St. Paul schools and a china kiln for Mechanic Arts High School.

12. On the origins of the Minnesota State Art Society, see State of Minnesota, *The Constitution and By-Laws of the Minnesota State Art Society*, (1903): 3-15; M. K. Bailey, "An Annual Art Exhibition," *The Bellman*, 26 March 1910, pp. 386-88; "The Beginning of the Minnesota State Art Commission," *The Minnesotan*, 1, no. 1 (July 1915): 24, 26; "Minnesota State Art Society," reprint from the *Magazine of Art*, Walker Art Center edition (ca. 1948): n.p. (from the pamphlet collections of the Minnesota Historical Society); Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota State Arts Board Administrative Files, State Art Society Scrapbook 1905-14, Minnesota Historical Society Collections (box 70 G4 7B); O. R. Geyer, "Putting Art to Work for the Masses," *Scribner's Magazine*, 62 (1917): 769-72; William Gray Purcell, "Made in Minnesota: The Story of Native Resources, Their Use and Possibilities," *The Minnesotan*, 1, no. 9 (April 1916): 7-13. With annual appropriations as small as \$2,000, the Minnesota State Art Society was able not only to purchase Minnesota art and handicrafts which were lent for study and exhibition statewide, but to sponsor exhibitions and offer cash prizes, provide training around the state, offer lantern slide illustrated programs, and publish *The Minnesotan*, a short-lived state arts magazine. The State Art Society had a difficult time maintaining its momentum over the years. But it was successful in disseminating ideas, encouraging the use of natural resources, and in taking programs and exhibitions to rural Minnesota, charitable institutions such as orphan asylums, and into ethnic communities in efforts to revive native and foreign crafts.

13. The Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts had its first official gathering in January 1883. Its first program was the Art Loan Exhibition, which provided art exhibitions from private collections in the area. Although some early supporters already felt a museum would be the appropriate next step, the limited funds available and the perception that arts education was a pressing need argued that a school would be a more practical first effort. The three-year course in decorative design was initiated in 1899 under the direction of Mary Moulton Cheney, an active member of the Minneapolis arts and crafts community. Cheney served as head of the department until 1917 when she became the director of the Minneapolis School of Fine Arts. She was the first woman to hold the position.

14. Nellie Trufant Papers, Minneapolis History Collection, Minneapolis Public Library. Gertrude J. Leonard, handwritten note, dated 5 January 1895.

15. *The Chalk and Chisel Club Outline of Study for 1895-1896, 1897-98*, and for an undated year, Minneapolis, n.p. The member names listed follow: Mrs. George Backus, Miss Gene G. Banker, Mrs. Edward Center, Mary Moulton Cheney, Miss Elena Jay Darling, Miss Emily Fairfield Darling, Miss Clara Derickson, Miss Adeline Gates, Miss Agnes Harrison, Mrs. Mary Helmick, Mrs. F. G. Holbrook, Mrs. T. J. Janney, Miss Gertrude J. Leonard, Miss Charlotte B. Long, Miss Hope McDonald, Mrs. E. H. Monroe, Mrs. Milton O. Nelson, Miss Marion Parker, Mrs. William Reno, Miss Mary Ella Simpson, Mrs. Ruth Wilson Tice, Miss Nellie Stinson Trufant, and Miss Hattie Eliza Welles.

16. The Chalk and Chisel Club, *An Exhibition of the Arts & Crafts Under the Auspices of the Chalk & Chisel Club* (Minneapolis, 16-19 November 1898): 1-30. The influence of the Arts and Crafts Society's exhibitions on Minnesota artists and educators was evident in an article which described a show of work by women with studios at the "Old Bandbox." ("In the Studio: The Busiest and Most Attractive Spots in Town this Week," *Minneapolis Journal*, 16 December 1899, p. 10.) The columnist described it as "the most beautiful [work] they have ever

shown." Elizabeth Chang's illuminations incorporated heraldic motifs, and Mrs. A. M. Wang showed work in burnt and stained woods. An eastern woodworker who had exhibited in the previous year (undoubtedly Arthur C. Grinnel of New Bedford, Massachusetts) had directly influenced the work of Mrs. Wang.

17. Chalk and Chisel Club co-founder Mary Helmick hosted the last meeting of the year in her home in Washburn Park. That meeting was both a formal farewell to Minnesota's first arts and crafts organization and a symbol of the larger community network now supporting the arts and crafts movement in Minnesota.

18. *Constitution and By-Laws of the Minneapolis Society of Arts and Crafts* (Minneapolis, n.d.), 5.

19. "Clubs and Charities," *Minneapolis Journal*, 18 November 1899, p. 12. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, advanced education for many women was not a viable option. A national proliferation of women's clubs and study groups at the turn of the twentieth century permitted women to expand their knowledge and exchange ideas. Minnesotans were no exception, and many of these clubs evolved into the formal organizations and programs that still exist today. Chalk and Chisel Club and Handicraft Guild members belonged to many such clubs and appeared frequently on the programs as participating members or guest speakers.

20. "Summer School Handicraft Guild," *The Craftsman* 8 (May 1905): 267.

21. "Art," *Minneapolis Journal*, 1 July 1905, p. 12.

22. *The Fourth Exhibition of the Arts & Crafts Society of Minneapolis, Minnesota* (15-21 November 1904): 29; *Minneapolis Journal*, 1 March 1905, p. 7.

23. "May Build a School," *Minneapolis Journal*, 20 July 1905, p. 4; "Handicraft to Build," 22 February 1907, p. 7; *The Dual City Blue Book* (Householder's Directory), 1907-9, p. 302. A guild advertisement notes that after October 1907, the guild would be in its new facility at 89 South 10th Street.

24. Elisabeth A. Chant, "The Handicraft Guild," *The Bellman*, 21 March 1908, p. 317-19. *The Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis School of Design Handicraft and Normal Art, Eighth Annual Session* (17 September 1912-31 May 1913): 3.

25. "Able Craftsmen for Summer Work: Art Institute will Send Jewelry and Pottery Teachers," *Minneapolis Journal*, 27 March 1905, p. 7; "Guild Workers Take up Pottery: First Effort of the Kind in Minneapolis," 19 April 1905, p. 12. Partly due to Webb's efforts, native clay deposits in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and Menominee, Wisconsin, were being mined to expand the American clay industry.

26. "The Village Gossip," *The Bellman*, 22 January 1910, p. 122; "The Village Gossip," 29 January 1910, p. 158.

27. Barbara Flanagan labeled the guild building a "little Greenwich Village" in 1973, reviving an appellation first used in 1916. "Handicrafts Flourish in City's 'Greenwich Village,'" *The Minneapolis Star*, 11 May 1973, p. 1B.

28. Ernest A. Batchelder, *Design in Theory and Practice* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1912), 7.

29. "Summer School Handicraft Guild," *The Craftsman* 8, no. 2 (May 1905): 267.

30. Handicraft Guild, *Summer School of Design Applied to Crafts* (19 June-19 July 1905): 1-4. Principal instructors working with Batchelder, some of whom continued at the guild throughout that first full year, included Florence D. Willets of The Art Institute of Chicago (pottery), Nelbert Murphy of Pratt Institute in Brooklyn (leatherwork adapted for public schools), James H. Winn of The Art Institute of Chicago (jewelry and metalwork), and John Ellsworth Painter of Minneapolis public schools (woodwork). Local craftworkers serving as assistant instructors included Edith Griffith and Winifred Cole in book binding, Grace Kiess in pottery, Bertha Lum in wood-block printing, Mary Moulton Cheney in design, and Corice Woodruff in sculpture and painting.

31. "Art Metal Course: Pratt Institute Recently Opened a Class for Women," *Minneapolis Journal*, 26 July 1901, p. 11. This article discussed the innovations at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, which was offering a new program to teach the art of metalwork in silver and gold. It

noted the high percentage of women enrolled and the opportunities such training offered them. So much interest was evident that an art metal class was opened expressly for women. Such a program, available for the first time in America, supplanted the previously limited options of apprenticeship in a factory or of study abroad. Shared goals between Pratt Institute and arts and crafts organizations in Minnesota resulted in an enriching exchange of students and instructors to teach handicrafts and train educators in the years to come.

32. *Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts Bulletin*, 2, no. 6 (Midsummer 1907): 10; *School Education* (September 1910): 53.

33. Handicraft Guild, *Summer School of Design and Handicraft: Third Annual Session*, (19 June–20 July 1907): 1–6.

34. *Minneapolis Journal*, 27 March 1905, p. 7; Handicraft Guild, *Summer School of Design Applied to Crafts* (19 June–19 July 1905): 1–4; *The Craftsman* 8, no. 2 (May 1905): 267; *Minneapolis Journal*, 20 July 1905, p. 4; *The Craftsman* 10, no. 1 (April 1906): 137; "Local Art Notes," *Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts Bulletin* 1, no. 10 (July 1906): 5; 2, no. 3 (March 1907): 11, 12; "Art Notes," *Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts Bulletin* 2, no. 5 (May 1907): 3; 2, no. 6 (Midsummer 1907): 10; Elisabeth A. Chant, "The Handicraft Guild," *The Bellman* 21 March 1908, p. 317–19; "Summer Schools," *The International Studio* 35, no. 7–10 (1908): xxiii; "Batchelder will Teach: Authority on Designs Opens Class at Handicraft Guild Feb. 1," *Minneapolis Journal* 9 December 1908, p. 13. Due to the varied material published on the career of Ernest Allen Batchelder, an extensive citation is provided to substantiate the discussion in the text related to the dates of his association with the guild. He also is listed in the 1909 Minneapolis city directory. There is no evidence that Batchelder played any direct role in the founding of the Handicraft Guild. He was brought in to direct the first summer course offered by the guild, and his retention in that role confirms that his talents and reputation were recognized and sought by guild officers and faculty to establish a program that promoted quality in design and coursework.

35. *The International Studio* 44 (September 1911): n.p.

36. In his position at the Minnesota State Art Society, Flagg became an active advocate for the revival of foreign crafts as commercial endeavors in rural locations, for the promotion and use of natural materials in craft work, for courses and lectures on arts and crafts, for traveling exhibition programs, and for the promotion of low-cost model house plans for use in rural and suburban areas.

37. University of Minnesota president's office, 1911–45, box 34, University of Minnesota College of Education folder 1916–40, University of Minnesota Archives, Minneapolis, Minn. Correspondence and memos between University of Minnesota administrators and faculty, Emma Roberts, Florence Willets, Ruth Raymond, Harington Beard, Minneapolis Civic and Commerce Association, and others related to the dissolution of the guild and its adoption by the University of Minnesota as its new art education department.

38. The exposure to Japanese material culture in goods as diverse as fans, embroidery patterns, and art pottery greatly influenced middle-class Americans, women in particular, and promoted among them a desire to own Japanese-inspired goods.

39. Julie Meech and Gabriel P. Weisberg, *Japonisme Comes to America: The Japanese Impact on the Graphic Arts, 1876–1925* (1990): 126–56; Mary Evans O'Keefe Gravlos and Carol Pulin, *Bertha Lum, American Printmakers, A Smithsonian Series* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).

40. The Minneapolis Institute of Arts acquired a major collection of Bertha Lum's color woodcuts for its holdings in 1916.

41. Henrietta P. Keith, "Decoration and Furnishing," *Keith's Magazine*, 10, no. 4 (October 1903): 185.

indescribably soft and beautiful finish to the surface. This wood lends itself admirably to such treatment, on account of its large, decided grain. This table was for a library, with slightly hexagonal outline, and around the natural veinings and markings of the center which looked like a piece of watered silk moiré, was carved a broad border of large plantain leaves and interlacing stems. The price of this rich and beautiful table was but \$85.00. . . . Those who know furniture only as the product of the department stores, have no conception of its refinements, when submitted to the hands of such artists.

42. Henrietta P. Keith and Eleanor A. Cummins, *Practical Studies in Interior Decoration and Furnishing*, 2d ed. (Minneapolis, M. L. Keith, 1909–10): 34, 110, 146, 153; M. L. Keith, *Interiors Beautiful and Their Decoration* (illus.), 3d ed. (Minneapolis, 1911–12), 62, 88. These publications appear to be compilations of published work and article research done for *Keith's Magazine*. The discussions and images of interior treatments identified as the "New Idea" Glasgow School style suggest the local constituency was well versed in this design school.

43. Pottery instruction was given by Florence Wales, secretary-treasurer of the guild. She, along with Margaret Hubbard, Jeannette Gunkel, Katherine Whitney, and Annette Wales were the first to produce guild pottery marked with its "characteristic monogram." A script variation of the HG cipher was used in published form from 1904 until early 1905. These marks illustrate the many methods used to mark Handicraft Guild pieces from 1905–18.

44. In the 1905 and 1907 summer school brochures the pottery course was described as including building, molding, throwing, and glazing. On page 13 of *The Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis School of Design Handicraft and Normal Art, Eleventh Annual Session* (21 September 1915–3 June 1916) the course was described as offering students several choices in pottery techniques, including "the making of low bowls, tall vases, jars with handles, tiles with incised designs, the modeling of low reliefs and the glazing and firing of these pieces."

45. "Society Biographies: The Handicraft Guild, Minneapolis," *Handicraft* 3 (December 1910): 341–42. "The Handicraft Guild pottery has become well known for its beauty of form and quiet, rich color. Architects are interested in the tiles produced and orders for specially designed mantles are frequently received." "Society Biographies: Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis," *Handicraft* 4, no. 5 (August 1911): 170–71. "In all departments a large part of the work executed is to fill special orders. The growing demand for tiles and copper hoods for fire places [sic], lamps, lanterns and other articles for specific places indicates more thought for decorative interiors." A small number of documented guild interiors have come to light but without any surviving records of the guild itself it is very difficult to demonstrate what part custom interior work might have actually played in guild production.

46. Martha Scott Anderson, "A New Art Industry May Grow from the Pottery Work of the Handicraft Guild," *Minneapolis Journal*, 2 September 1905, p. 12. The photographs which accompany this article are by Arus S. Williams and also appear in some of the guild's promotional material.

47. *The Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis School of Design Handicraft and Normal Art, Twelfth Annual Session* (19 September 1916–3 June 1917): 7.

48. Douglas Donaldson, "The Making of Metal Lampshades," *Palette and Bench* 2 (February 1910): 109–11. According to this article, guild workers used metal and pottery lamp bases created in their shops as well as examples produced by other American craftworkers. Donaldson noted in the article that the goal was for the base and shade to harmonize with each other, resulting in a beautiful and functional piece.

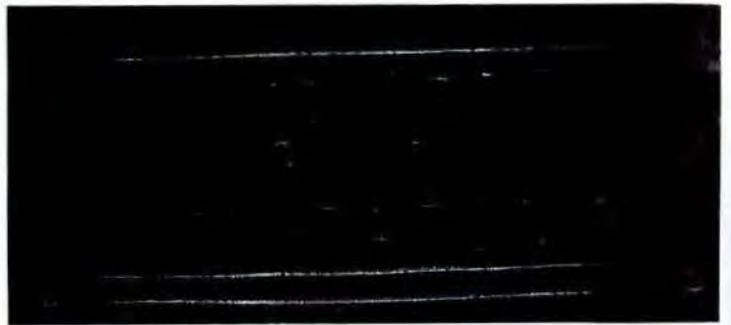
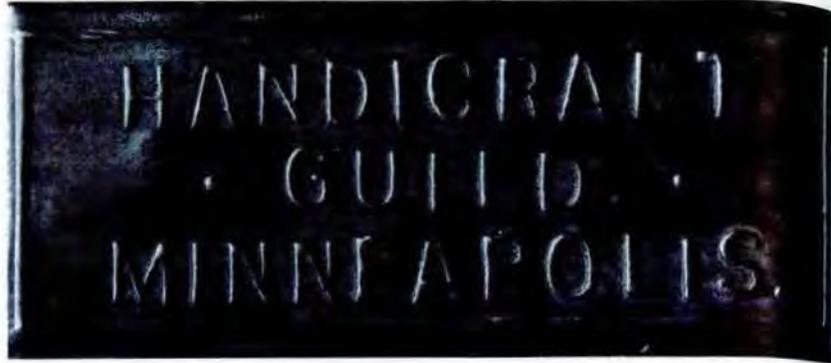
49. Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis, "Made in Minneapolis," (n.d.): 1–4. An undated promotional brochure for the Handicraft Guild.

50. *Palette and Bench* (February 1909): 119. A large photograph features nine pieces of tooled leather done by students of the Handicraft Guild ranging from purses to folders. The pieces were made by Mrs. Taylor, Miss Ekers, Miss Everett, Miss Carter, Miss Ludwig, Mrs. Seamar, Mrs. Stevens, and Mrs. Ingold.

51. *Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts Bulletin* 2, no. 2 (February 1907): 7. "The spread of the arts and crafts influence cannot take exactly the same lines of advance as in the old days of the guilds, for commerce

The Japanese artists are probably unsurpassed by any in the world in producing decorative effects with wood. Western woodworkers have indeed studied these Eastern models to much purpose, as was evidenced in some extremely beautiful pieces of furniture seen recently in the artistic rooms of a leading decorator [Bradstreet]. Notable among these was a table of cypress wood, treated with the new process of eating out the soft parts of the wood by acids, bringing out the natural markings and veinings of the wood strongly, yet leaving an

HANDICRAFT GUILD MINNEAPOLIS



Details of Handicraft Guild markings. Photographs courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society, Peter Latner, Gary Mortensen, and Robert Fogt.

now demands wide markets for its products and seeks to reach the everyday life. If art is to become a livelihood, it must follow the signs of the times, and appeal to the average purse."

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- Ames, Charles W. and Mary Lesley Ames and Family Papers. Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul. Several boxes contain correspondence, reports, speeches, and so on, with particular association to the St. Paul Institute, 1907-81. Ames was a founder and first president of the Institute.
- Arts Board Collection. Minnesota State Archives. Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul. Administrative files 1903-86, five boxes. Annual and biennial reports, 1904-77, one box. Contains a variety of materials documenting the Minnesota State Art Society (Commission) including histories, reports, correspondence, published materials, photographs, scrapbook, and so on.
- Berglund, Hilma, Collection. American Swedish Institute Collections, Minneapolis. Archival material, family history, and objects acquired by the institute in 1979. Includes journals/

diaries by Hilma and her mother. Art work, textile work, and signed ceramic pieces by Hilma are likely from her period of association with the St. Paul Institute.

- Bookwalter, Mary Linton. Laura Linton MacFarlane, Pasadena, California. Personal collection of family papers, printed ephemera, and so on, which documents the career of Mary Linton Bookwalter. Minimal personal correspondence.
- Cheney (Mary Moulton and family) Papers, one box. Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul. Contains minimal correspondence between Cheney and other artists, monogram sketchbooks, bookplate materials, two order books from her shop, and some summary biographical material with corrections provided by her.
- Cheney, Mary Moulton. Papers. Uncataloged, one box. Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul. Contains primarily original artwork by Cheney, sketches for everything from monograms to bookplates, greeting cards, stationery, stained glass windows, andirons, oils, and conventionalization of floral specimens. Also includes brochures from her business, The Artcraft Shop, loose product samples, and an order book from her shop. Work by her partners and others who did design work for her is also included.
- Paist, William and Herbert. Papers. Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul. Political, military, and business career documentation, and family genealogy information. Herbert was the husband of artist Henrietta Barclay Paist.
- University of Minnesota President's (papers) Office, 1911-45. Box 34. University of Minnesota College of Education folder 1916-40. University of Minnesota Archives, Minneapolis. Includes correspondence and memos relating to the absorption of the Handicraft Guild by the university as the new art education department.
- Wheeler, Cleora. Papers. Uncataloged, nine boxes. University of Minnesota Archives, Minneapolis.
- Winters, Robert. The author generously allowed me to read sections of his unpublished biography of Ernest A. Batchelder.
- PERSONAL ACCOUNTS AND MISCELLANEOUS
- Anderson, Marcia. Paper on the Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis, 1990 Winterthur Conference, "The Substance of Style."
- Berglund, Theodora. Letters of inquiry and response between her and the Handicraft Guild. Guild student card.
- The Camlet Needlecraft Shop, dated invoice. Minneapolis, 1918.
- Letter from Marjorie M. Haish to her sister, 28 January 1915.
- Paist, William B. St. Anthony Park, Minnesota. Several meetings and conversations between Bill and Marcia Anderson from 1990-present. Bill is the grandson of artist Henrietta Barclay Paist.
- Pattee, Gladys. Minneapolis. Several meetings and conversations between Gladys and Marcia Anderson from 1985 until her death in December 1991.
- Letter from Louise Pickney to Mr. A. C. Gooding, 15 July 1909.
- Schutt, Elizabeth. Minneapolis. Several meetings and conversations between Elizabeth and Marcia Anderson from 1992-present. Elizabeth is the niece of Harriett Carmichael, partner with Mary Moulton Cheney in the Artcraft Shop from 1908-12.