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THE EVOLUTION OF AN APPRAISER'S KNOWLEDGE
AND APPRECIATION OF GUSTAV STICKLEY AND
THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT IN AMERICA

This thesis explores the life and work of Gustav Stickley in America, concentrating on the role of the furniture industry in the movement. This study will examine a career path of this leader. It will provide the reader with the historical characteristics, etc. of the movement.

Carlene A. Collins, A.S.A.

A Culminating Project Presented to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Lindenwood College in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science

THE EVOLUTION OF AN ABSTRACT KNOWLEDGE
AND APPRECIATION OF GUSTAV STUCKLEY AND
THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT IN AMERICA

This thesis explores the Arts and Crafts Movement in America concentrating on one of the foremost leaders in the movement. This study will examine a chair produced by this leader. It will grade the chair for its physical characteristics, age, and condition.

GUSTAV S. STUCKLEY, 1875-1956

An Abstract prepared in the Faculty of the Graduate
School of Pennsylvania College of Podiatry
in fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science

THE EVOLUTION OF AN APPRAISER'S KNOWLEDGE
AND APPRECIATION OF GUSTAV STICKLEY AND
THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT IN AMERICA

Carlene A. Collins, A.S.A.

An Abstract Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate
School of Lindenwood College in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science

COMMITTEE ON THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT

FURNITURE OF THE AMERICAN ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT

Approved by the Board of Trustees of the American Museum of Natural History

Published by the American Museum of Natural History

Adapted from the "Furniture of the American Arts and Crafts Movement"

by the American Museum of Natural History, 1912



MORRIS CHAIR #332 GUSTAV STICKLEY

H 40" W 23" D 27" MARK: GUSTAV STICKLEY DECAL CA 1909-1912 OAK
Private Collection

COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF CANDIDACY:

List of Associate Professor Rita A. Kottmeyer
Chairperson and Advisor

Adjunct Instructor Patricia Soucy, A.S.A.

I. Introduction
Adjunct Instructor William A. Fones, A.S.A.

II. Literature Review

III. Student Activities Committee of the Arts and
Sciences Division

Works Cited

IV. Personal Experiences with Learning: Research and
Analysis, Application to a Specific Study by
Debra Plutsky

Works Cited

V. Role of Original Studies in Relation to
Field and Instructional Work

Works Cited

Plus Addendum

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iii
List of Figures	iv
Preface	v
I. Introduction	1
II. Literature Review	4
III. Gustav Stickley, Craftsman of the Arts and Crafts Movement	8
Works Cited	23
IV. Personal Valuation Methodology: Research and Analysis, Appraising a Morris Chair by Gustav Stickley	25
Works Cited	47
V. Role of Original Finish in Relation to Value and Identification Marks	48
Works Cited	51
Vita Auctores	53

List of Tables

Table 1	31
Table 2	41

Salute

List of Figures

To my children Lewis and Betty who were living in
Lewis during the three summer sessions that I spent at
Linswood College. It seemed like Sunday the 1st of
June of the same year.

Figure 1	40
Figure 2	52

To my family including Mr. and Mrs. Macgregor and Mrs. C. C. C. for their assistance and encouragement.

To my teacher, William A. Jones, for his help, material, and willingness to help me in every way.

To the Board of Education, the Board of Trustees, and the Board of Management for their help.

To my classmates, they who encouraged me to write about something I knew and loved.

To Grandpa H. W. of Hopedale and editor
Cant. for his help, to my mother, Lewis, for his
unfailing support.

Preface

To my children Lewis and Kitty who were living in St. Louis during the three summer sessions that I spent at Lindenwood College. It seemed like destiny that I should enroll as a Lindenwood graduate student since they would be there at the same time.

To my Faculty Advisors Dr. Rita Kottmeyer and Patricia C. Soucy for their expertise and encouragement.

To my reader, William A. Fones, for his calls, material, and willingness to help see me through.

To Noel Novak-Pilch, fellow classmate, for her constant encouragement to finish.

To my sister-in-law, Joan, who encouraged me to write about something I knew and loved.

To Brenda Harris, my typist and editor.

Last, but not least, to my husband, Lewis, for his unflinching support.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

This appraiser grew up in the 1940's and 1950's spending weekends in a lakeside cabin filled with Mission style furniture. The furniture was in the cabin when it was purchased in 1940, and was perceived by this appraiser as having no merit beyond being sturdy and utilitarian. In retrospect, it will never be known whether that cabin furniture bore any special producer's marks, because it was sold along with the cabin in 1960.

It is many years later when this appraiser's appreciation of Mission style furniture begins to evolve. It starts in the 1980's with research into the Arts and Crafts movement which was enjoying renewed interest. Many contemporary artisans and appraisers were beginning to realize the importance of this style in American history.

Later, the appraiser is wandering around a flea market and spies a sturdy oak chair that sparks memories of the lake cabin's furniture. A closer examination of the chair reveals a producer's mark on the back which piques the interest even further. The chair is purchased for less than a hundred dollars, and the story begins.

The appreciation of Mission style furniture deepens with further study of the Arts and Crafts movement and the type of furnishings produced during that time. Each new article read on the subject prompts more interest. Participation in an Arts and Crafts seminar at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina, broadens the appraiser's knowledge. Further research and study help the appraiser identify Mission furniture and textiles in both private home settings as well as the marketplace.

Hopefully, this paper will help others understand and appreciate the Arts and Crafts movement and its importance in America's culture.

The second chapter examines a literature review of the Gustav Stickley research.

The third chapter discusses Gustav Stickley, Craftsman of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Chapter four examines a chair produced by Gustav Stickley. It examines its characteristics and grades the chair in relation to other comparable chairs produced at the same time. It walks the reader through the argument with an analysis of the comparables.

Chapter five deals with the value judgement pertaining to restoration of the finish and marks identifying the furniture.

The work has been accomplished primarily by the Arts and Crafts Movement in America which helps to understand the movement and the furniture produced during the movement. The market place is usually "bazaar" with variety in style of furniture. The work of Arts and Crafts movement are very independent, making all their own as well as learn how about the design and the design of the movement. The authors use an image book as a reference. There are many excellent illustrations and some studied books and articles available and are distinguished between the designers.

Perhaps, the finished furniture in the Arts and Crafts Movement is held in the Green Book in America. There is a book in the library which is a study reference book.

Eric S. Johnson, a scholar of the Arts and Crafts movement supports the conclusion. Many other articles in 1996 are David Latham, author of *Restoration of the*

Chapter II

Literature Review

In the past fifteen years much scholarship and research has been accomplished pertaining to the Arts and Crafts Movement in America which helps us understand the movement and the furniture produced during the movement. The market place literally "buzzes" with activity in sales of furniture. The new breed of Arts and Crafts collectors are very independent, reading all they can in order to learn more about the designs and the designers of the movement. The auctions are no longer made up of veteran dealers. There are many advanced collectors who have studied books and catalog reprints and can distinguish between the designers.

Perhaps, the foremost conference on the Arts and Crafts Movement is held at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina each February. 1996 marked the ninth conference held there.

Bruce E. Johnson, a scholar of the Arts and Crafts movement organizes the conferences. Among those attending in 1996 was David Cathers, author of Furniture of the

American Arts and Crafts Movement. In his seminars he discussed Gustav Stickley's philosophy and focused mainly on his furniture.

In his book he accurately tells the story of the Arts and Crafts furniture made by Gustav Stickley. The book traces the history of Gustav Stickley, discusses philosophical and stylistic sources, and explains how the furniture marks encode a system for accurately dating examples of his work.

Nancy Ann Smith, author of Gustav Stickley - The Craftsman states "As I have thought about Gustav Stickley, I have become more and more convinced that his most important contribution to American culture resides within his ideas about life as it should be lived and the environment in which life should be lived. There is something compellingly noble about the idea of a wholesome life lived within a well-designed, simple environment. To be sure, Gustav Stickley's furniture and houses were often magnificent and his Craftsman magazine was vitally important in spreading the gospel of the Arts and Crafts Movement. He is still revered as a designer, maker, and

publicist. However, if we think of him in only this capacity, we miss the point. He was not just a doer; rather, as a doer and thinker, he was an exemplar of the spirit of the Arts and Crafts Movement."

David Linquist in the Official Price Guides to Antiques and Collectibles provides much information about Gustav Stickley's furniture pertaining to ranking pieces of furniture as to quality and condition. He also provides much information on the state of the market.

Bruce Johnson's second edition of the Official Price Guide to Arts and Crafts provides information on finish, construction and repairs. This area was also discussed at length at the Grove Park Inn in special seminars.

Authors Tod M. Volpe and Beth Cathers in Treasures of the American Arts and Crafts Movement 1890-1920 states that the most prominent figure in the American Arts and Crafts Movement was Gustav Stickley's. These books provide wonderful illustrations of his work in furniture with descriptions and measurements. They state that typical of Stickley's first "Mission" period (1900-1904) is a reclining chair in oak that was designed for reading

and that in all he designed seven Morris chairs, the first patented in October, 1901.

The "Arts and Crafts Quarterly Magazine" provides many articles on Gustav Stickley. Barry Sanders in A Complex Fate Gustav Stickley and the Craftsman Movement chronicles Stickley's life. He reveals what Stickley borrowed from earlier styles and how he redesigned them to suit his needs. The American Society of Appraisers Personal Property Valuation Methodology: Research and Analysis Course explains the process of matched pair analysis which is a helpful method of estimating value for any personal property item.

An appraiser must know all the factual information about an object in order to appraise that object. This includes knowledge of the maker and knowledge of the special characteristics of the object.

Chapter III

Gustav Stickley, Craftsman of the Arts and Crafts Movement

"While the Arts and Crafts Movement, a brief far-reaching revolution in the field of decorative arts, has often been reduced to its more plebeian catchword "Mission Oak," it became an international movement in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It culminated between 1900 and 1910 in the development of a style of decorative arts that included furniture, pottery, metalware, linens, and lighting fixtures, which, while distinctively American in style, it combined crucial elements from several different countries. From England came the philosophy, in the writings of Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, and William Morris, who established the principles upon which the movement was built. From America came the entrepreneurs and industrialists such as Gustav Stickley, Charles Lambert, and Elbert Hubbard, who embodied those principles in a new style of decorative arts made affordable to the middle class through carefully controlled mass production. And from Europe came the designers Josef Hoffmann, Charles MacKintosh and C. F. A. Voysey, whose influences brought grace and sophistication to the furniture, metalware, and

decorative arts which have emerged as the best of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Each individual had many goals but all shared one desire: to raise the level of the craftsman to that of the artist, hence, the name Arts and Crafts."¹

Gustav Stickley was a very vocal proponent of the principles of the Arts and Crafts Movement. He raved about the "badly constructed, over-ornate, meaningless furniture that was turned out in such quantities by the factories. . .that its presence in the homes of the people with influence led directly away from the sound qualities which make an honest man and a good citizen."² Although he had been on both sides of the issue during the later part of the nineteenth century, Stickley and his brothers produced and sold reproductions of furniture made in the styles of Chippendale, Sheraton, Hitchcock, and whomever else was popular at the time. However, he was unhappy selling furniture and left the family business.

It is true that furniture of the late 1800's was garish and often bizarre. Manufacturers had elaborate machines to carve ornate moldings. Characteristics of

this era were ornate scrollwork, turned bulbous legs, thin veneers, molded ornaments, recessed and raised panels, thin hardware, pressed designs, and turned spindles of every description.

Gustav Stickley made it his goal to produce honest furniture that could be "moderately priced, simple, strong comfortable furniture."³

"In the beginning there was no thought of creating a new style, only a recognition of the fact that we should have in our homes something better suited to our needs and more expressive of our character as a people than imitations of the traditional styles and a conviction that the best way to get something better was to go directly back to plain principles of construction and apply them to the making of simple, strong, comfortable furniture."⁴ -- Gustav Stickley, 1909.

Gustav Stickley's ideas on designing furniture were described by his grandson, Captain Peter Wiles, Sr., as "He always thought he was designing furniture for the common man, but when he did such a good job, he could never sell it quite cheaply enough for the common man to

buy it. He had great empathy for the common man, but in the end, the piece had to be very good and Gus knew that. Obviously, he thought more about having the piece right than about who bought it. There was real human contact with his work. He did it well. He had a real feeling for it. He liked to touch it and he did not look at it as a mechanical drawing. And that is how you get the proportion and how you get the feel of a piece. Proportion was the most important thing."⁵

By Gustav Stickley's own account, he began his experiments in Arts and Crafts design in 1898, the year he went into business on his own. In the following years his furniture business grew, flourished, expanded into several related fields, and then entered a period of decline, finally failing in 1916."⁶

Stickley acknowledged his debt to Ruskin and Morris and their followers; "The handful of English Medievalists who instituted the Arts and Craft Movement looked forward as well as backward." Their vision was equally clear and

of the present and the future without loss of force or substance."⁷ Stickley traveled abroad in 1894. He saw work by C. F. A. Voysey, Ashbee, and other English designers. In Paris he visited the gallery of S. Bisig. Stickley examined new furniture designs in Germany and Austria. But he apparently felt most in tune with the English, having already absorbed so much through the writings of Ruskin and Morris.

In the beginning Stickley organized his United Crafts workshop along William Morris' ideas. In 1898 he began his business in Syracuse, New York, with workers resembling the medieval guilds and thought of himself as the Master of the United Crafts. He felt that the aim of this guild was to raise the intelligence of the workers and with the idea "that all men shall have work to do which shall be worth doing."⁸ In the beginning his business was successful and in October 1901, he released the first issue of The Craftsman magazine. This magazine publicized the architecture, furnishings, and philosophy of the Arts and Crafts Movement. In 1904 Stickley became concerned with the name of his guild. The 'United Crafts' name was

retired in favor of 'The Craftsman Workshops.' In 1905 he opened his "New York Exposition Office" at 29 West 34th Street and had three new catalogs. These catalogs were in furniture, metal work, and needlework. In 1908 he announced his plans for Craftsman Farms which was to be a guild-like artisan colony with a farming and handicrafts school. While his principle furniture showrooms and editorial offices of "The Craftsman" magazine remained in New York City, he began purchasing hundreds of acres of woods and pastures across the East River in Morris Plains, New Jersey. He planned a working farm where young boys and girls could be schooled in a number of practical trades. Fourteen cabins and buildings were eventually constructed on his 650 acre retreat.

In 1908, he expanded his New York City operations and opened a salesroom in Boston. In 1910, the Stickley family moved to Craftsman Farms and by 1912 he opened display rooms in Washington, D.C. and in 1913 he signed a twenty-one year lease on a twelve-story building in New York City. By 1915, Gustav Stickley entered bankruptcy. "On the eve of World I, Stickley's empire crashed under

the weight of overextended finances and declining sales. Creditors forced the sale of his factory and of Craftsman Farms, and also the closing of the Craftsman Building, and The Craftsman magazine. Stickley's dream never materialized at Craftsman Farms."⁹ "The world's attention was focused on troubles brewing in eastern Europe and America's approaching involvement in a struggle for power between the ancient nobility of two, small European countries. The world war that erupted made hand-hammered hardware, hand-painted vases, and quartersawn oak seem insignificant in comparison. By the time the war had ended in 1918, so had interest in the Arts and Crafts Movement. Returning soldiers brought back stories of a new style in Paris, soon to be called Art Deco, the surge of nationalism brought on by the war resurrected interest in Colonial reproductions and the two new interests left no room for the Arts and Crafts Movement."¹⁰

"Gustav Stickley made his first Arts and Crafts furniture in 1898, and continued designing and producing it until the failure of his business in 1916. His style changed dramatically over those years, and can be divided

into four fairly distinct evolutionary periods: the experimental period 1898-1900; the Craftsman period 1900-1904; the mature production period 1904-1910; and the final production period 1910-1916."¹¹

In 1898 Stickley began designing his first Arts and Crafts furniture. These designs were based on influences he had seen in Europe. These early pieces failed in his own eyes for they did not have strong forms. Joints were not locked with dowels, thin pieces of wood were used and the tenon-and-key construction appeared very seldom. Curved moldings were sometimes cut into the edges of the seat rails. Some designs of this period have surfaces with incised relief carving and some have sawed-out decoration. Stickley made use of dull finishes which were described as gray-brown, dull and lusterless. He was sure these dull finishes would come into vogue.

The importance of his early work is that it showed his first steps toward the Arts and Crafts style. It showed the influences of the English, French and American sources that he had seen in his travels. He borrowed from many sources but he added his own genius. He surpassed

his influences by stripping furniture to its essentials and creating something beautiful.

He wrote "I wanted them to be beautiful. . .not with the superficial prettiness of applied ornament, but with the inherent decorative quality which comes from good proportions, mellow finish, and harmonious decorations."¹²

During this period, Stickley was experimenting and trying to attain the beauty he wanted. He was also an anonymous supplier to the Tobey Company, a Chicago furniture manufacturer and retailer. This agreement with the Tobey Company did not last long for Stickley had a strong mind of his own and probably did not wish for his furniture to go unrecognized. He was probably ready to move on with his creative ideas. He entered the retail marketplace on his own and began a time in his life that proved to be remarkable.

Stickley's Craftsman Period began in 1900. It resulted in four years of a growing change in his work. He began by adding curves and moldings to his massive forms. "His evolving style was most evident in the large tenon-and-key joints, chamfered boards and exposed tenons.

In 1902, Stickley's furniture design became more assured. It grew increasingly rectilinear and severe, with the modest curves and moldings giving way to robust geometrical forms. In 1903, these designs were replaced by lighter pieces as the Craftsman Period drew to a close. Stickley's instinctive sense of good proportion had its greatest expression during these years. His pronouncements on comfort and functionalism aside, he wanted to make handsome furniture."¹³

In this Craftsman Period Stickley's furniture was plain and straight forward characterized by beautiful proportions and elements that showed the structure of the piece. Each piece showed the grain and color of the fumed oak. The furniture was solid, sturdy and useful. During this period Stickley realized that the mass-produced shiny hardware would not work on his furniture and developed a Craftsman style hardware. It was hand-wrought and made in copper and iron. He also used square wooden knobs which he liked a great deal.

Dark finishes prevailed during this period but he also developed lighter colors. "Stickley may have first

used his shellac finishes in these years. Sometimes a clear shellac finish was used to produce a surface sheen. He also added color by mixing dyes with the shellac and then building up several layers to give the finish depth."¹⁴

By 1902, Stickley was looking for new designs and entered his most exciting era. Harvey Ellis came to work for him in 1903. Ellis, a gifted architect, was hired to write about and design furniture. His designs were more decorative than Stickley's. They were lighter in design and were very sophisticated. He created a line of furniture but the inlaid pieces were not produced commercially -- a limited number of pieces were made for exhibits and for display. It was not popular in its day, and his designs were produced for only a year. Harvey Ellis' death in 1904 was perhaps a reason why the furniture did not have time to catch on with the public. Stickley, however, was influenced by Ellis for many years to come. Stickley continued to produce examples of Ellis-designed furniture (without the inlay) until the close of his factory in 1916. The inlaid pieces still command the

highest premiums from current collectors and will always remain the rarest of Stickley's furniture.

The Craftsman Period was characterized by continuous change. In 1900, the designs were somewhat lightweight and by 1901 the furniture was massive with angles, curves and moldings. By 1902 Stickley's furniture was still massive but almost totally rectilinear. In 1903, Ellis' colorful motifs appeared. Simpler furniture was made in 1904. These four years in Stickley's career marked the high point of his cabinet making.

The years 1904-1910 saw the maturation of Stickley's designs and style. He still stuck to his basic desire to produce useful, durable and comfortable furniture. During this period he stayed with purity of form and proportion. He simplified many of his designs without skimping on his high standards of construction and finish.

It is important to note that during this period that the heavy chamfered boards he had used on the backs of bookcases and desks were replaced by laminated oak panels. Mullion construction was simplified, with mitered mullions replaced by lap-jointed members butted flush into door

frames. Tenon-and-key construction was used less often, and tenons generally ended within the mortise rather than passing through. Stickley's first use of oak or chestnut veneer began during this period. This enhanced his designs with matched grain patterns. He drew on Ellis' designs by using curves and wide overhanging tops. During this period he offered four fumed oak finishes. They were nut brown, light brown, light brownish-green, and dark brown with a little gray.

Stickley introduced his spindle furniture in 1905. he received a patent for a spindle armchair and sidechair. Although this design was not as forceful as chairs designed in the Craftsman Period, it is a good design. His hardware also changed during this period. It was still hand-wrought iron, but made into new shapes. These new shapes included the V-shaped pull, the flattened V-shape in three sizes, and the oversized round pulls.

In most cases during this period, round-head wood screws were used instead of the more expensive lag screws of the early years. The square-faceted wooden knobs were replaced with round pulls.

The Final Production Period 1910-1916 saw few new designs. Stickley stated "Most of my furniture years before this period was so carefully designed and well-proportioned in the first place, that even I with my advanced experience cannot improve upon it."¹⁵

During this period he reacted to new demands in the marketplace. He added new pieces to fill the demands of the public. The hand-hammered hardware was still used on his furniture but lacked the refinement of the earlier hardware. By 1912 the only choice of color was the fumed oak with a little color added. The new designs he did add were very plain with thin oak boards. His creativeness was on the downhill.

It must be stated that during this period, Stickley was still far superior to other cabinet-makers that were his competition. By 1912 his designs were no longer evolving and were declining -- Gustav Stickley's era would never recover.

As in most careers, Gustav Stickley's career developed slowly and in stages. Stickley was more than forty years old before his name and his ideas were known.

It was a very brief period during his lifetime, 1900-1916, that he had a great influence on American furniture design. Yet today, his Arts and Crafts philosophy has exerted great interest in the public, as well as interest in his Arts and Crafts furniture. The quality and scope of his furniture work is unequalled.

* Arts and Crafts Quarterly, February, The Journey, May 15, 1900, p. 1.

* Craftsman, David M., Exposition of the American Arts and Crafts Movement, New York, Year of the Century Edition, 1900, p. 15.

* House Beautiful, December 1900.

* Craftsman, David M., Exposition of the American Arts and Crafts Movement, New York, Year of the Century Edition, 1900, pp. 11-12.

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- ¹⁰ IBID, p. 6, 7.
- ¹¹ Cathers, David M., Furniture of the Arts and Crafts Movement, New York, Turn of the Century Edition, 1996, p. 44.
- ¹² The Craftsman, October 1913.

¹³ Cathers, David M., Furniture of the Arts and Crafts Movement, New York, Turn of the Century Edition, 1996, p. 49.

¹⁴ IBID, p. 53.

¹⁵ Gustav Stickley, "Chips from the Workshops of Gustave Stickley," 1901.

"A professional appraisal report is prepared to appraise property that someone is acquiring or disposing of. The report describes the purpose of the assignment, identifies the intended use and defines the subject." The report must lead itself to the scrutiny of third parties who may realize it at any time in the future. There will always be other readers to be considered.

This market value is a hypothetical concept. "Fair" implies the large scope of what is arbitrary, with no one having an advantage and with equality of attention. Market implies the large scope of supply and demand, a place for exchange, exchange rights and the exercising of rights, levels, opportunity and frequency in a future. Fair implies the large scope of understanding that comes

Chapter IV

Personal Valuation Methodology: Research and Analysis, Appraising a Morris Chair by Gustav Stickley

"Every appraisal is an argument asserting value."¹

The appraiser must clearly understand the purpose of the appraisal. This can be determined by interviewing the client and fully understanding why the appraisal is needed and what decisions will be made from it.

"A professional appraiser must generate an appraisal report that succeeds in answering the appraisal questions, describes the purpose of the assignment, identifies the intended use and defines the values."² The report must lend itself to the scrutiny of third parties who may utilize it at any time in the future. There will always be other readers to be considered.

Fair market value is a hypothetical concept. "Fair implies the large scope of what is ordinary, with no one having an advantage and with equality of intention. Market implies the large scope of supply and demand, a place for exchange, exchange rights and the exercising of rights, levels, opportunity and frequency in a forum. Value implies the large scope of understanding that these

are estimates of value, not prices, that can be tracked by happening and frequency; value is an expression of use and utility; the quantification of value ultimately hinges on what others have similarly experienced with a property in a similar situation."³

The value sought in an appraisal for insurance coverage of personal property is replacement value. Replacement Value has three categories: Replacement Value - Comparable; Replacement Value - Cost New; and Replacement Value - Reproduction Cost.

The purpose of the appraisal for the Gustav Stickley Morris chair is to estimate the Fair Market Value for Replacement Value - Comparable. Even though there are new copies of the Gustav Stickley Morris chair being produced today, their values are not pertinent to the objective of the original Gustav Stickley chair. Someone wanting to own the look rather than the more costly original would be interested in these reissues. True collectors of Gustav Stickley's furniture reject them.

In an article by Vincent Plescia in the American Society of Appraisers Personal Property Journal, he writes

that in 1985, the L & J. G. Stickley Company located in Marlius, New York began to assemble a collection of early examples of their Mission Oak furniture styles to use as prototypes in the event a market developed. "On December 10, 1988, Christie's New York Auction House held an auction that changed the Stickley market. The record bid of \$363,000 from Barbara Streisand for Gustav Stickley's personal oak and wrought-iron sideboard, was the green light the company had been looking for. The following week the company activated their 1985 plans. Currently there are 52 pieces in the "Reissue Collection" with an additional 10 styles to be released in the near future."⁴ Manufacturers of the New Mission Oak reissues are continued in the same tradition as those made in the early 1900's.

The Stickley Company being aware of the unscrupulous have gone to great lengths to make sure that the new examples are distinctly, but subtly, different from their predecessors. Currently the Stickley Company is producing the Gustav Stickley Morris style recliner with leather upholstery for \$3,000. At the Grove Park Inn Arts and

Crafts Conference a show is held where those attending the conference can buy the many items produced during the Arts and Crafts Movement. There is also an area showing these reissues and reproductions of carpets, wallpaper, and lamps.

The trained eye should never mistake the old for the new. Training the eye simply takes years of study and seeing the very best of comparable examples.

In an appraisal report, the designation of the appropriate avenue of replacement is an important determinant in estimating the value at which a property should be insured.

"Replacement Value - Comparable is the price of cash or other precisely revealed terms that would be required to replace a property with another of similar age, quality, origin, appearance, and condition within a reasonable length of time in an appropriate and relevant market. Intangible provenance value is additive as appropriate."⁵

In the process of estimating the fair market value, the appraiser must consider the argument which is made up

of three parts. The claim or identification, the support or data gathered and the warrant or logical conclusion. The appraiser must build the argument fact by fact and design the research realizing that appraisal objective determines the course of research.

Examining the object the appraiser should photograph several exposures of the object -- the front, back and angles of view, close-up of marks and signatures, sketching details which might not show. A second should be made of the materials, age, period, and attribution. Code model or serial numbers plus measurements must be recorded. Type of construction, style and ornamentation must be noted and all distinguishing features. Additions or repairs and condition are pertinent things to be answered.

The key to identification research is finding the facts which argue for ranking. This can be found in books, auction catalogs and attending shows and shops where many comparable items can be found. Academics, dealers and collectors can be consulted. Using one's own judgment is important. Someone you are talking with about

the object may be misinformed.

"The object must be ranked by quality and value. The elements of quality are primarily questions of aesthetic judgment independent of economics and fashion. Characteristics of value are primarily questions of fact and have an objective relationship to the marketplace."⁶

4. Color

5. Material

6. Technique

7. Proportion

8. Style

9. Taste

10. Attention

11. Condition

Characterization of value

1. Reality

2. Utility

3. Acute

4. Style

5. Quality ranking for the object

6. Proportion

George Mackley in Table 1 - listing their views, as

Elements of quality

1. Harmony of the whole
2. Form
3. Ornament
4. Color
5. Material
6. Technique
7. Function
8. Style
9. Date
10. Attribution
11. Condition

Characteristics of value

1. Rarity
2. Utility
3. Scale
4. Style
5. Quality ranking for the maker
6. Provenance

"Gustav Stickley believed the living room should, as a gesture of hospitality and warmth, expand to accommodate as many guests as possible. If hospitality can be conveyed through a piece of furniture, then the single piece that best expressed largesse and openness throughout the Arts and Crafts period must be the Morris Chair. This chair epitomized not only Stickley's craftsman furnishings, but Mission furniture is general and, for that reason, usually turned out to be the first piece of Mission furniture people acquired for their homes."⁷

William Morris's firm had popularized the chair in England. When Stickley traveled to England it immediately caught his attention. The first Morris chair was designed by Philip Webb for the Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. in 1865. So powerful was the Morris name that it attached itself to this particular chair.

"After Stickley's visit to England in 1903, he began offering various models of the Morris chair. The most substantial of which was a large, flat-armed monster of a chair, with slats under the arms and an adjustable back, and harnessed solidly together with mortise and tenon

joints. People could flop themselves down on its ample cushions and kids could sit on its broad arms. In other words, Stickley's Morris chair could withstand whatever use or abuse it received. This was exactly what Gustav Stickley wanted in his furnishings, clean lines with strength."⁸

The Craftsman Workshops designed the chair to give pleasure. Most models had wide arms to accommodate books, pipes, or drinks. Even wide enough to use as small writing desks and huge stuffed cushions for further comfort. In front of the Morris chair could usually be found a Craftsman footstool. All the Morris chairs sold well and remained in the catalogs over the years.

For today's collectors, these chairs are sought after. Collector's are willing to pay high prices for them. Many companies of the Arts and Crafts period produced Morris style chairs but none surpassed those produced by Gustav Stickley. Today his chairs outrank all the others.

Gustav Stickley wanted to make his furniture easy to identify. It was always signed. For the modern

collectors, this represents a godsend. He changed the style of his shopmark several times giving a key to accurately dating his work. It was important to Stickley for him to show the difference between himself and his competitors. He knew his work was the best and he wanted the world to know.

Over the years, paper labels have been removed and the branded marks have been removed by refinishing. An appraiser or collector must be able to identify his furniture in their absence. Unmarked pieces can often be accurately attributed by referring to Stickley's catalogs now widely reprinted. It is important to know the furniture first then look for marks as confirmation.

Stickley had four periods of furniture making. Knowing the structural details of each period one can date the pieces.

It is possible to date a Morris chair on the basis of seat construction. A loose cushion on a fabric, rope or cane-wrapped frame, will probably date circa 1901-1906. A swing seat circa 1907-1909 which is a loose cushion supported on a strong piece of canvas stretched between

the front and rear seat rails. From 1901-1916 a spring seat was used.

In the List of Tables, the reader will find Gustav Stickley's Craftsman shopmarks dating from 1901-1916. In late 1912, Stickley introduced the final version of his joiner's compass using only his last name. This mark is branded into his furniture. It is found on his chairs on the outside rear stretcher. This is the mark found on the subject chair.

The only decorative elements which are considered important in Arts and Crafts furniture are those relating to the construction of the furniture. Tenons projecting through the posts of tables and chairs, tenon and key-locking joints, and exposed-dowel-pin construction. "This craftsmanship served as a natural form of decoration that simply expressed the integrity of the object."⁹

"Repairs made to Arts and Crafts furniture can dramatically affect the desirability and value of any example. Any repair of certain significant alterations such as a replacement leg, extensive reveneering, or other replacement pieces may reduce the total value to less than

75% of its original value without the repairs. Repaired pieces cannot be appraised at the same level as a similar piece in better condition."¹⁰

Most collectors usually want a signed piece of Arts and Crafts furniture. An experienced collector is not so much bothered whether a piece is not signed. These collectors have studied examples of the furniture and have studied reprints of manufacturer's catalogs and recent sale catalogs from the major auction houses. Many of the earliest examples were not signed. Montgomery Ward advertised Gustav Stickley's earliest production in a 1902 catalog, identifying it as having been acquired from a "major Eastwood, New York manufacturer."

One of the major factors to consider is the finish; is it original? Experienced Arts and Crafts collectors insist that the finish is one of the most critical points. "A serious collector of any artifact of the decorative arts appreciates an example that is most closely related to the concept and condition when the artisan or designer created it. Refinished examples lose a great deal of their character."¹¹

Any man-made alteration by chemicals or abrasion or any other form of restorative enhancement that changes an original finish greatly reduces the value to serious collectors. Removing dirt and grime with mild cleansers is permissible, and a coat of paste wax may be used to bring back some of the gloss.

Does the piece have its original leather cushions? To serious collectors missing or replaced leather can never accurately duplicate the original. Gustav Stickley produced pieces in finishes that ranged from deep black to pale gold. The leather color was chosen to compliment the finish. An appraiser must see furniture in its original state at important Arts and Crafts auctions and shows. This can teach the appraiser and collector more in a few hours than could be learned over a two to three year period.

Provenance is important in the value of a piece of Arts and Crafts furniture. A piece belonging to a celebrated early collector or from an important estate originally furnished by a major furniture maker adds bonus points to the piece.

"A perfect ten in Arts and Crafts furniture occurs when a rare form, in original finish, signed, considered a great design, with attention paid to the selection of the wood, and with a provenance."¹² These pieces bring the highest prices and will continue to do so. A similar chair or item, stripped, unsigned, and without provenance, could bring 20% to 30% less.

People are frequently puzzled by the apparent inconsistency of prices at auction; all these factors play a considerable role in the estimation of value.

Morris chair by Gustav Stickley

Easy chair with leather-upholstered cushion on slat back leaning away from seat; angle of back adjusted by moving wooden supporting round disks that fit into slots behind arms. Flat arms broadening from back to front. Arms supported by front and rear posts; horizontal rectangular panels enclosing seven vertical slats. Two brackets under each arm. Posts passing through arms. Wide front seat rail. Legs square and straight. Oak. Leather cushions (recovered). Height: 42", 27½" to seat. New York. Mark: Branded shopmark 1912-1916.

FIGURE 1



Table 2

Matched/Pair Analysis

Gustav Stickley Morris Chair #332

SUBJECT: Gustav Stickley Morris Chair #332

Characteristics:

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Original Finish</u>	<u>Repairs</u>	<u>Original Leather</u>	<u>Market Value</u>	<u>Provenance</u>	<u>Value</u>
Signed Gustav Stickley 1912-1916 Branded Mark #332	Fine original fummed oak finish	None	Reupholstered Leather	Serious Collector	None	
	+	+	-			
				+		

Comparables:

A. 20th century Auction, Treadway Gallery, Inc., May 15, 1994.

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Original Finish</u>	<u>Repairs</u>	<u>Original Leather</u>	<u>Market Value</u>	<u>Provenance</u>	<u>Value</u>
Gustav Stickley 1912-1916 Branded Mark	Fine original finish	None	Reupholstered Leather	Dealer	None	\$5,500

B. 20th Century Auction, Treadway Gallery, Inc., May 15, 1994

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Original Finish</u>	<u>Repairs</u>	<u>Original Leather</u>	<u>Market Value</u>	<u>Provenance</u>	<u>Value</u>
L. and J. G. Stickley	Fine original finish	None	Reupholstered Leather	Dealer	None	\$4,000

C. Christie's, New York, June 9, 1995

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Original Finish</u>	<u>Repairs</u>	<u>Original Leather</u>	<u>Market Value</u>	<u>Provenance</u>	<u>Value</u>
Gustav Stickley 1909 Red Decal	Fine original finish	None	Original Leather	Dealer	None	\$6,900

D. Skinner, Inc., Boston, May 15, 1992

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Original Finish</u>	<u>Repairs</u>	<u>Original Leather</u>	<u>Market Value</u>	<u>Provenance</u>	<u>Value</u>
Gustav Stickley 1912-1916 Branded Mark	Refinished	None	Reupholstered Leather	Dealer	None	\$3,520

E. Grove Park Inn Arts and Crafts Antique Show, February 18, 1996

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Original Finish</u>	<u>Repairs</u>	<u>Original Leather</u>	<u>Market Value</u>	<u>Provenance</u>	<u>Value</u>
Gustav Stickley Branded Mark 1912-119	Original	Repairs	Original Leather	Collector	None	\$11,000

F. Grove Park Inn Arts and Crafts Antique Show, February 18, 1996

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Original Finish</u>	<u>Repairs</u>	<u>Original Leather</u>	<u>Market Value</u>	<u>Provenance</u>	<u>Value</u>
L. and J. G. Stickley	Original	None	Original Leather	Collector	None	\$6,400

G. Grove Park and Inn Arts and Crafts Antique Show, February 18, 1996

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Original Finish</u>	<u>Repairs</u>	<u>Original Leather</u>	<u>Market Value</u>	<u>Provenance</u>	<u>Value</u>
Gustav Stickley 1912-1916 Branded Mark	Original	None	Original	Collector	None	\$13,500

H. David Rago's Arts and Crafts Auction, New York, March 3, 1996

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Original Finish</u>	<u>Repairs</u>	<u>Original Leather</u>	<u>Market Value</u>	<u>Provenance</u>	<u>Value</u>
Gustav Stickley 1912-1916 Branded Mark	Original	Repairs	Reupholstered Leather	Collector	None	\$9,350

I. Characteristics:

Signature, Original Finish, Repairs, Original Leather Upholstery, Market Layer, Provenance, and Value

II. Subject Chair:

+ Signed Gustav Stickley, 1912-1916, + original fumed finish, + no repairs, - Reupholstered leather, + collector (market layer), - (none) Provenance = Value

III. Value Solvers

1. Signature:

Compare F (\$6,400) with H (\$9,350) = \$2,950

2. Original Finish:

Compare D (\$3,520) with H (\$9,350) = \$5,830

3. Repairs:

Compare E (\$11,000) with G (\$13,500) = \$2,500

4. Original Leather

Compare H (\$9,350) with G (\$13,500) = \$4,150

5. Market Layer

Compare G (\$13,500) with C (\$6,900) = \$6,600

6. Provenance

Subject chair or comparables had no provenance.

This factor is only beginning to be appreciated by Arts and Crafts collectors. It does add bonus points to a piece. A similar piece with a provenance could possibly bring 30 percent more when sold.

If the value of a branded Gustav Stickley Morris Chair (1912-1916) with original finish, no repairs made, and with original leather cushions is sold to a collector for \$13,500, what is the value of a comparable chair with reupholstered leather cushions.

Comparing G with H for reupholstered leather cushions = \$4,150.

Comparing G with E for repairs = \$2,500.

Loss for reupholstered leather cushions \$4,150 - \$2,500 = \$1,650.

The amount of loss = Value before loss less value after loss = \$13,500 - \$1,650 = \$11,850.

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Chapter V

Role of Original Finish in Relation to Value and Identification Marks

Many individuals claimed to be the first to produce Mission oak furniture. These claims may be true but Gustav Stickley is clearly above everyone else. His designs have weathered time. He manufactured the finest proportioned Arts and Crafts furniture with the highest standards in construction and finish. He ranks at the very top of any of the Arts and Crafts furniture manufacturers. When ranking Arts and Crafts furniture, one can safely start by comparing pieces on a 1 to 10 basis, with the Gustav Stickley piece being the 10 as the most desirable.

One of the first things to consider when purchasing a piece of Arts and Crafts furniture by Gustav Stickley is the finish. Serious collectors insist that the finish is the most critical point.

Training the eye to recognize the original Gustav Stickley finish should be top priority before buying a piece. "A serious collector of any artifact of the decorative arts appreciates an example that is most

closely related to the concept and condition when the artisan or designer created it."¹ Refinished pieces lose much of the character that only age and patina can give it. The original finish will bring 100 percent or more over the same piece in a refinished state.

What is an original finish? It is widely accepted that any man-made alteration by chemicals or abrasion or any other form of restorative enhancement changes an original finish. It is acceptable to remove the dirt and grime with mild cleaners and apply a coat of paste wax to bring back the gloss. The main factor being that any conservation must be possible to reverse.

It is wise to know that if you have a piece of furniture signed by Gustav Stickley that it is a form of Arts and Crafts furniture that will command a much higher premium in its original finish state. If one is puzzled why one item brings more at auction than another that may seem identical, it is the fact that the original finish plays the largest role in determination of value.

Gustav Stickley's original fumed finish is unique and would be difficult to duplicate. He chose American white oak, quartersawn in order to expose the grain and to

reduce cracking and warping. He then darkened the wood to a rich brown color by fuming with ammonia in a closed container or by applying the chemical directly to the surface.

The best opportunity to see a variety of furniture in its original state is to attend an Arts and Crafts auction and carefully examine and compare pieces in original and refinished condition.

"Stickley's most consistently popular piece was his Morris chair."² Owning one in its original finish is a collector's dream today and they are bringing high values of \$9,000 to \$13,500. A Morris chair with adjustable back is listed in Gustav Stickley's 1910 catalog for \$37.00.

Morris chairs are in high demand by collectors, especially those furnishing only one or two rooms, not an entire house. Demand enters the overall pricing scheme in a manner different from frequency of appearance. "A Morris chair signed by Gustav Stickley and in excellent condition is an example of an Arts and Crafts item that finds approval of the majority of collectors and frequently brings high prices regardless of how frequently they appear on the market."³

TABLE I

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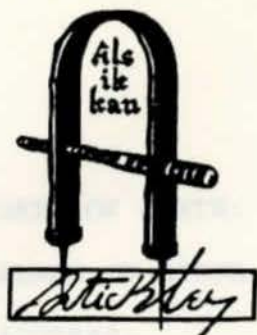


1864 - 1912



1912 - 1920

FIGURE 2

IDENTIFYING MARKS

1902 (a)



1902 (b)



1904 - 1912



1912 - 1916