

THE TAPLEY COLLECTION

ESTABLISHED 1931

HISTORY, TIMELINE AND FUTURE

By Bruce H Tapley – Owner-Designer/Goldsmith



In the Spring of 1931, my Father, Norman T. Tapley, a 27 year old, widowed single father of a 3 year old boy, was working as the Manager at Mutual Grocery Co. in East Orange, N.J., when my Mother, Marion E. Hayes, a 20 year old telephone switchboard operator who worked around the corner, walked in on her lunch break. They struck up a conversation and before Marion left, Norman asked if he could take her to a movie. The current favorites at the time were 25 cent gangster and monster

films, but Mom said yes, if they could see the Marx Brothers. They laughed and agreed that my father would pick her up at home to meet her parents.

When Norman arrived at the arranged place and time, Marion wasn't ready, partly as the wiles of the times dictated. My Grandfather, Wesley E. Hayes greeted Dad warmly, and offered him to sit on the carpet with him, as he was poring over his recent find of Native American Arrowheads. He was a pretty hip Victorian, and while he was a bicycle builder and velodrome racer, and later auto mechanic and car dealer, his great passion was traveling through the forests of NJ, NY, and CT. with his wife, Lizzy, searching for mineral specimens and Native American artifacts. Sometimes in costume in the old jalopy.

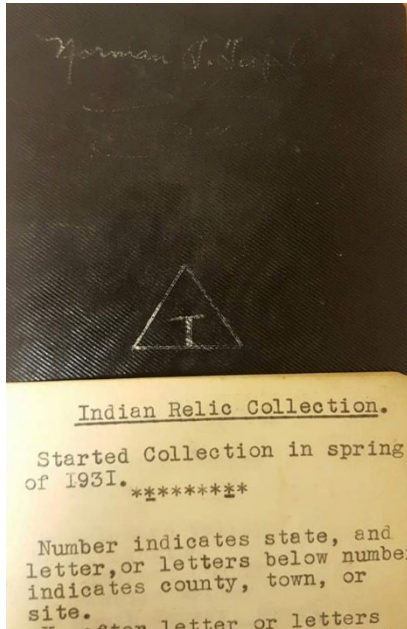


When Marion came downstairs for their date, they all continued to sit on the carpet. There was nothing my mother liked more than listening to her father talk about the things he was passionate about.

They never went out on their first date...

But, at the end of the evening, as my father was leaving, my grandfather took my father's hand and placed in it 6 Arrowheads. "These are for you..."

They all said goodnight, and the next morning, my father went back to his store, took a small notebook from inventory, and on the first page he wrote: "Started Collection in spring of 1931" And added his signature and his logo of the "T" inside a triangle. 94 years later, THE TAPLEY COLLECTION is in full swing, still using the Triangle T



Soon, my father and mother were married and they joined my grandparents on their many forays into the forests and fields of NJ, NY, and CT. In the ensuing years, my father grew his collection exponentially to include stamps, coins, books, jade carvings, Egyptian antiquities, Meershaum Pipes, Celtic and Viking weaponry, Greco Roman Intaglios, and Antique Arms.

In 1947, with three friends, he started the New Jersey Arms Collectors Club and began to grow in expertise and reputation as the go-to Antique Arms dealer in the area. He sold to the local police departments, and was an expert source for information on the subject.

Arms Club Dines Here

(Picture to the Right)

Twenty-three members of the newly organized New Jersey Arms Collectors Club held their first annual dinner meeting Saturday night in the Park Hotel.

Both antique and modern arms were exhibited. Among them were a seven-foot flintlock gun used by Lord Nelson's men in the mast tops during the battle of Trafalgar and an extra large bore gun used to defend Sandy Hook during the Revolution.

1760 Horn Shown

There were a Kentucky flintlock rifle of 1812, an English duelling pistol of 1800 and a Colt Walker pistol of 1847. A Havana powder horn of 1760 was also shown.

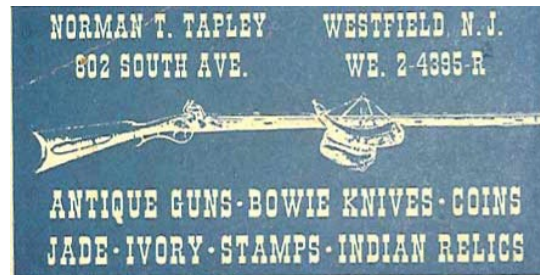
C. Stanley Jacob of Plainfield, president of the club, said arms collectors clubs have been formed in many parts of the country but never before in this state. He declared a considerable number of collectors live in the Plainfield area.

The organizers of the club, he related, first met last May to establish an arms collectors organization. Its purpose, he said, is "to bring into helpful relations the arms collectors of the state, its museums, its historical societies, its clubs and other organizations interested directly or indirectly in



—Photo by Harold Morse

SHOW HISTORIC ARMS—Officers of the New Jersey Arms Collectors Club at its first annual dinner meeting in the Park Hotel Saturday night exhibit and discuss antique weapons. Left to right, Norman Tapley of Westfield, treasurer, holds 1812 Kentucky flintlock; Paul J. Westergard of Plainfield, secretary, with 1800 English duelling pistol and large bore gun used in Revolution; Albert Foster, East Orange, vicepresident, shows Colt Walker pistol of 1847, and C. Stanley Jacob of Plainfield, president, wears Havana powder horn of 1760 and holds flintlock of type used in the Battle of Trafalgar.



His love for collecting thrived for many years, and living in our house was like growing up in a museum, with many of his associates calling at our house to share pieces, and finds, stories, maps to locations, and a snifter of fine brandy or port. This all continued until the winter of 1965, when my father suddenly fell ill, and within a matter of three weeks, he was gone.

I was 15 at the time, and existed in a dull state through my high school years. My mother tried to keep the collection intact, as much as she could, while having to sell off many pieces in order to survive. There were break ins and some low end dealings, but she held her own with her head high.

Several years later, I was rummaging through our basement looking for my old 50s and early 60s baseball cards, when I noticed a board on the wall that didn't quite match the rest of the wall. I had never noticed it before, and I was unaware that my mother was preparing to sell the old house when I went away to college in 1969. I pulled on the board on the wall, and inside the wall was a small compartment. And in the compartment was a box of what I later found were late 17th to early 19th Century Intaglios from The Grand Tour of Europe. (see footnote 1)



Footnote 1

The Grand Tour was the principally 17th- to early 19th-century custom of a traditional trip through [Europe](#), with Italy as a key destination, undertaken by [upper-class](#) young European men of sufficient means and rank (typically accompanied by a [tutor](#) or family member) when they had [come of age](#) (about 21 years old). The custom—which flourished from about 1660 until the advent of large-scale rail transport in the 1840s and was associated with a standard itinerary—served as an educational [rite of passage](#). Though it was primarily associated with the [British nobility](#) and wealthy [landed gentry](#), similar trips were made by wealthy young men of other [Protestant](#) Northern European nations, and, from the second half of the 18th century, by some South and North Americans.



A c. 1760 painting of [James Grant](#), [John Mytton](#), [Thomas Robinson](#) and Thomas Wynne on the Grand Tour by [Nathaniel Dance-Holland](#)

By the mid-18th century, the Grand Tour had become a regular feature of aristocratic education in [Central Europe](#) as well, although it was restricted to the higher nobility. The tradition declined in Europe as enthusiasm for classical culture waned, and with the advent of accessible rail and steamship travel—an era in which [Thomas Cook](#) made the "Cook's Tour" of early mass [tourism](#) a byword starting in the 1870s. However, with the rise of [industrialization](#) in the United States in the 19th century, American [Gilded Age](#) [nouveau riche](#) adopted the Grand Tour for both

sexes and among those of more advanced years as a means of gaining both exposure and association with the sophistication of Europe. Even those of lesser means sought to mimic the pilgrimage, as satirized in [Mark Twain's](#) enormously popular [Innocents Abroad](#) in 1869.

The primary value of the Grand Tour lay in its exposure to the cultural legacy of [classical antiquity](#) and the [Renaissance](#), and to the aristocratic and fashionably polite society of the European continent. It also provided the only opportunity to view specific works of art, and possibly the only chance to hear certain music. A Grand Tour could last anywhere from several months to several years. It was commonly undertaken in the company of a [cicerone](#), a knowledgeable guide or tutor.

In the time preceeding this fortuitous find, I was trying to figure out a way to stop the decline of my father's, and now my mother's, collection. Seeing these carvings serendipitously jump out at me made everything come into focus. I decided right then and there that it was up to me to not only stop the decline of THE TAPLEY COLLECTION, but to make it grow, using handmade jewelry as the focus of the new growth that I had intended. I set out to try to figure out how to accomplish my goals.

The first thing I did was to purchase some plaster of Paris and begin mixing and pouring into the antique intaglio carvings. Intaglios are carved in below the surface, while Cameos have a raised, bas-relief contrast with the background surface. Once I poured the plaster, let it dry properly, and removed it from the original, I could see that the impressions I had made

were not only very clean, but the images were much more clearly represented. I also noticed that most of the images were distinct Greco-Roman Mythological Characters, some of which I remembered from studying Classical Mythology in 8th grade. This also meant to me that if I, as a not very good student, was able to recognize them, that they could be quite recognizable and popular with others, as well.

Next step, shop for mold making materials. I wanted a technique where I could mold both the pretty fragile plaster, as well as molding the original carvings without damaging them, so that I would have access to the reproduction of both the 'intaglio' and the 'cameo' styles. I found the right materials and process and made the intended molds. Intended, because my intention was to be able to create wax models that I could then cast into metal using the 'Lost Wax Casting' method.

I knew a little about this, even subconsciously, because my father's day job was working at a plastic extrusion factory in the 50s and early 60s. He brought home the prototypes of the first Hula Hoop and the first Frisbee. Although the early Frisbee was called, and embossed with the words, Pluto Platter. He brought one home for us to play with one winter in 1957, just before they were sold to Wham-O and marketed as Frisbee.

After making the molds, I bought a casting machine, kiln oven, vulcanizer for continuing molding, associated materials, some Sterling Silver, some Gold, and a book called Creative Casting by Sharr Choate. The book gave me the best start I could have asked for, and I was on my way.

In the next several years, I spent learning my craft, by casting and fabrication, which is more like building up metal with sheet, wire, solder, and fire. I made pieces and drove around trying to sell to stores for their resale. I consigned pieces when I could, just to get them out there. If one

of my designs was reproduceable, I would make a mold of it. I worked my way into jewelry stores as someone who could repair jewelry. And this is how I learned to repair jewelry. Everything that came in the doors for repair was most likely done from a different designer, a different source, a different technique. I had to think backwards as to how it was done, what pitfalls to avoid, to learn the properties of the different gemstones, the critical precautions to take. (I could tell you stories...).

I learned enough to be able to do custom work for people, using my designs or translating their ideas. And this progressed into working mostly in Gold at that time. I worked in resort areas and places where there was a continuous flow of new possibilities in customers. As my skills increased, everything I created fell under and into THE TAPLEY COLLECTION.

In the mid 70s, I worked in a jasper mine and lapidary shop in S.W. Idaho, digging, cutting and polishing jasper gemstones in shapes and design that became known as Picture Jasper. I slept in an old trailer out in the desert, and worked in trade for my choice of gemstones at the end of each week. After a few months, a friend and I traveled to Amsterdam with a box of about 250 polished Picture Jasper gems. We had success immediately selling these gems that no one had seen much in Europe. We sold everything the second day we were there. We bought a gold VW Bug, called back to the mine to send us a box of polished stones, drove around Europe for 8 months, receiving more shipments, and selling stones, many times in front of boulevard cafes, often on a piece of black silk over a cardboard box, wherever we went, through 15 countries. Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen, the Ponte Vecchio in Florence, in a studio in Picasso's Chateau near the mountain Paul Cezanne became fixated on in his work.

Perhaps the most significant feature of this experience was absorbing 8 months of being exposed to History, Architecture, Art and remnants of the Classical World. This is where it all coalesced for me. When we finally made it back to East Coast America, and my mother's basement, my first instinct was to jump back into working on the classic intaglio pieces. It became my main focus, yet all the while continuing to expand my skills as a Designer/Goldsmith.

I continued until Jan. 1979, when I had a bad accident with a powersaw, ripping open the palm of my right hand. As it happened, and I started bleeding out, I clearly remember looking at my hand and thinking, 'I'm paying my dues right now, and if I can get through this, I'll be the best damn jeweler I can be.' After 450 stitches in the palm of my right hand and a transfusion including a hefty dose of Hepatitis C, came many months of personal rehab.

I then returned to California and set up shop in a beachside motel, with a casting machine in the kitchenette, where neighbors were invited to come and stand on the edge of the machine to keep it from flopping around at high speed.

I spent the next year working to obtain copyrights of the pieces I had created, and in 1981-82 I was awarded registration copyrights for the original collection, both for Sculptural Works of The Visual Arts (VA107272) and Published Non-dramatic Literary Works (TX817264) for Descriptive Mythological stories that I wrote to accompany my pieces.

I continued to make pieces, and sell them up and down the coast. I was offered a job in a jewelry store in Marin County on the north end of the

Golden Gate Bridge, and moved there, continuing my own work at night. While working at this store, we received an order from George Lucas and Skywalker Ranch for an order of close to 500 belt buckles, with the Lucasfilm Ltd Logo. These buckles were presented to employees of Lucasfilm for gifts as part of end of year bonuses.



One day I saw an article in the newspaper about a National Museum Tour coming to San Francisco's M.H.deYoung Museum. It was called The Search For Alexander and it featured the most remaining artifacts and information of the story of the life of Alexander The Great. I bought some gold, and sat down to make about a dozen pieces of mythological intaglio pendants. I called the director of the deYoung Museum and arranged for an appointment. The director was very enthusiastic, and suggested that once the Alexander exhibit opened, that I set up a nice display in an anteroom at the exit of the exhibit. I worked constantly for weeks until the exhibit opened. And when it opened, the pieces started selling immediately. I made jewelry late into the evenings, and sold at the museum during the day from February to May, 1982. I was introduced to the manager of the Museum Store of The New Orleans Museum Of Art, and I was asked to continue this process by setting up a display there when the exhibit continued from June – September, 1982. I went there for the opening reception and opening week, and joined the Museum

Store Association. The exhibit for THE TAPLEY COLLECTION at the Alexander Exhibit in New Orleans was as successful as the exhibit in San Francisco.



I was inspired and motivated by these previous successes and continued on my path, with an emphasis not only on the corporate logo recognition and awards pieces, but also, and more rewarding for me, continuing to expand my work using the classic mythology that always had a deeper meaning for me. Although the classics required a bit more sophisticated audience, I knew that creating collections of classical style pieces that transcended time were something that never went out of fashion.

Soon after, I was able to seek an opportunity that would combine the ideas of Classical Style Jewelry and the concepts of branding and licensing. I sought avenues for continuing the work. Once again, I reached back into my father's collection, and found a very old, exquisitely carved

shell cameo, depicting the profile of a Greco-Roman Soldier. I carefully molded the cameo, and painstakingly created The Golden Trojan. I made an appointment with the on campus store at The University of Southern California, and was granted a license under the auspices of USC to create and sell this new collection of pieces.



Fresh from the success of my copyrights and licensing, I continued to create pieces, and purchased Shelter Bay Jewelers, a jewelry manufacturing and repair shop in Mill Valley, Ca. There, in addition expanding my collections, I continued my other business as a manufacturing jeweler, doing custom work and jewelry repair, consulting and collaborating with other local jewelry designers, who I invited to have a presence in my jewelry studio.

These were very productive years. I continued to create many one of a kind pieces, as well as continuing my expansion of collections. It was then I designed, created, produced and copyrighted The TRUE CLASSICS

COLLECTION, designs in Gold, Silver and Platinum, while expanding my



REFLECTIONS OF ANTIQUITY Collection.



Around this time, I had one of the most fortuitous meetings of my career. His name was John David Stanton, and he was a custom jewelry designer and goldsmith, about 25 years my senior. He had owned a fine jewelry store in Sausalito, Ca since about 1967, and was instrumental, along with a few other jewelers, in creating what became known as the “Sausalito Look”. We became very good friends, and soon realized that we had much in common in our approach to jewelry making. He would not like me

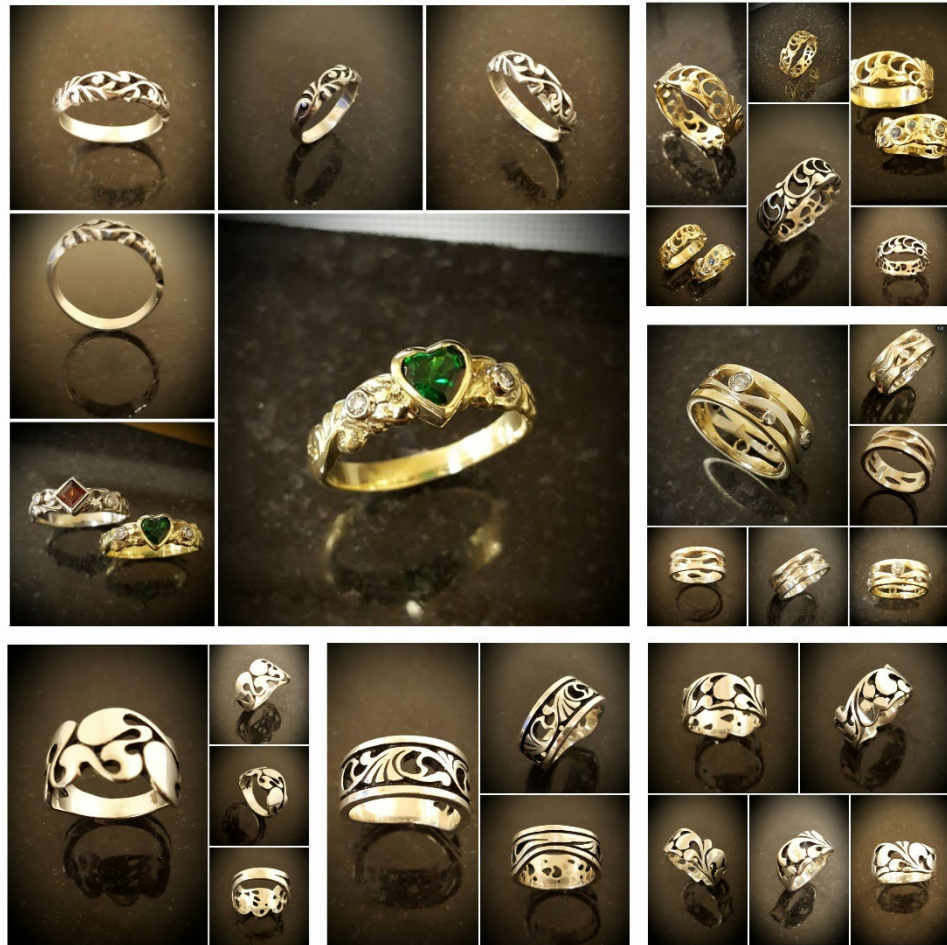
calling him an artist, but to me, and to his many years worth of clients, he was a great artist. Like me, he was completely self taught. And he was a really good, and kind man. We saw each other frequently, and he and I considered him as a grandfather to my young daughter. When he was ready to retire, he asked if I would like to be the one to take over his store. I jumped at the chance, and he included in the deal all his tools and equipment, workbenches, safes, props and displays, and most importantly, his many years of the molds of his designs. Most of the molds of his designs had deteriorated over the many years, but I was able to inject them with even small pieces and shards of wax, and from those small beginnings, working with John David's original sketches, I was able to recreate almost his entire catalog of designs, including all the copyrights of his designs, which I soon incorporated into THE TAPLEY COLLECTION. We worked together for a couple of months, and then created and published them, copyrighted for the reopening of The Tapley Collection in his old location in September, 1993. We remained good friends for many years, and I am forever grateful, not only for his selfless contributions to my own work and career, but also for his trust and friendship. I have continued to expand on his designs and have been making and selling them continuously now for well over 30 years. One thing that made them great companion pieces for my existing collections is that they are timeless, and never go out of style. I organized them into categories and collections, as I do with my own work, and I have been making them and selling them now for well over 35 years to thousands of customers. I am actually making wedding rings for the grandchildren of the grandparents who were also my clients. Because many of the pieces were based on Art Nouveau, one of John David's favorite Art Movements, I named our collaborative contribution to THE TAPLEY COLLECTION,

NOUVEAU ESTATES. Art Nouveau is often described as being characterized by long, sinuous organically inspired lines. For me, the connection between Art Nouveau and Classical Art reflect each other, The word 'Classical' is thrown about quite a bit these days, yet I describe it as : Lucid, with correctness of style and order, and holding enduring significance. The emphasis here is on form, simplicity and elegance. I think of classical as something you don't want to turn away from, whether it be Rembrandt's 'Night Watch' or a '57 Chevy cruising down the road. An additional benefit for me, and also for my clients is that I get to name all my pieces and tell a story. And I often encourage young jewelers to name their pieces. Jewelry is all about story and romance. Naming is an easy way to establish a connection.

Included in the NOUVEAU ESTATES COLLECTION are sub categories, including a small selection:

NOUVEAU AQUA – Designs inspired by the flow of water or ocean, waves, ports of call, explorers, exotic places, wind patterns, etc. On research, I've found that 80% of the population of America lives within 50

miles of the ocean or gulf. We all have a connection to water. We are



about 60% water.

NOUVEAU BOTANICA – Designs inspired by natural, organic forms, often leaves and flowers. Palm, Bamboo, Maile, Hibiscus and more.



NOUVEAU TROPICA – Designs especially relevant to life and living in tropical areas. Sea life, Island designs, Maps, Mythology, and more.



After moving to Maui, Hawaii in 2000, it was easy to continue to be inspired by the natural beauty and wonder of the islands and the Aloha Spirit.

Once settled in, I began work on a new collection I designed.

NALU – Nalu is the Hawaiian word for wave. Most of the NALU COLLECTION used Natural Clear Quartz swirl carvings over different color Mother of Pearl. While shell is often quite fragile for jewelry, the shell in this case was laminated to the back of the quartz, making it effectively into one gemstone, for durability, as well as the natural beauty of the Mother of Pearl. NALU HONU (Wave Turtle) is particularly popular.



Now, after living and working on Maui for close to 25 years, and after Sausalito, having had 2 of my own fine jewelry galleries on Maui, and developing a 50 plus year history of clients, much of my inventory is now being displayed at several local Maui Galleries.

I continue to field requests from other galleries to show THE TAPLEY COLLECTION.

Because so many of the designs of THE TAPLEY COLLECTION have been so popular and successful, I have decided to turn to the licensing of these designs. That is, to offer licenses to one or more manufacturers, depending on territories.

All designs to be licensed are strictly copyrighted and registered with the U.S. Copyright Office.

In designing the pieces available, I have developed over time, a market for these designs with a very good profit margin. I have evidence of sales, not only from my own retail galleries, but also from some of the most successful galleries on Maui, as well as galleries from several states. We are not yet a household name, but history, evidence of profit, sales, and the fact that the designs are new to most people work in our favor

In conclusion, as Owner- Designer/Goldsmith of THE TAPLEY COLLECTION, Author and Claimant of all Registered Copyrights, and Acting Licensing Agent for the same, I am offering the licensing rights for approximately 75 + of my best selling designs.

Information available upon request.

Thank you

Bruce H. Tapley

Owner- Designer/Goldsmith

THE TAPLEY COLLECTION

Established 1931

