American Collectors of Russian Decorative Art

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Thom: Treasures into Tractors: the Selling of Russia's

Lu Hural Heritage, 1918-1938

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MERICAN INTEREST IN COLLECTING Russian decorative art has developed slowly but continuously since the late nineteenth century. First exposed to contemporary Russian enamels and porcelains at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876, Americans later patronized the Russian department at Tiffany & Co. in New York, where Kornilov porcelain, Moscow enamels, silver, and bronzes were featured. They were attracted by the exotic, Russian-style designs of interlace and bright colors decorating these objects.

Despite the fact that this style was, by the 1890s, about to run its course in Russia, Russian enamels enjoyed great success in 1893 at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago.1 Perhaps it was this early exposure, or perhaps the arrival in New York City of Russian émigrés with their tragic stories of escape and deprivation, that in the 1930s ultimately led wealthy Americans to acquire mementos of Russian imperial life. The Russian Revolution had great meaning for Americans on both sides of the political divide. Many fellow travelers opposed tsarist rule, and especially after the stock market crash of 1929, were curious about the new communist regime in the Soviet Union. Sympathizers and ordinary tourists alike traveled to the fledgling country to see this experiment firsthand and brought back icons and other treasures. Many of the first American acquisitions of Russian art must be seen, in part, as the collecting of tourist souvenirs. Because many works of applied art available for sale were less than 100 years old and thus not considered antique, it took time for collectors and curators to appreciate their artistic, historic, and cultural significance. Serious dealers like Joseph Duveen, such collectors as Andrew Mellon, and museums like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Philadelphia Museum of Art were only interested in Old Master paintings or eighteenth-century French furniture, porcelain, or silver.

With a few exceptions, individual collectors in the 1920s and 1930s assembled the most prominent collections of Russian art now housed in

Catherine the Great Easter egg, 1914, firm of Fabergé, St. Petersburg. Henrik Wigström (1862–1923), workmaster; Vasilii I. Zuev (b. 1870), miniaturist. Marjorie Merriweather Post was given this egg by her daughter Eleanor. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 11.81.1–2.

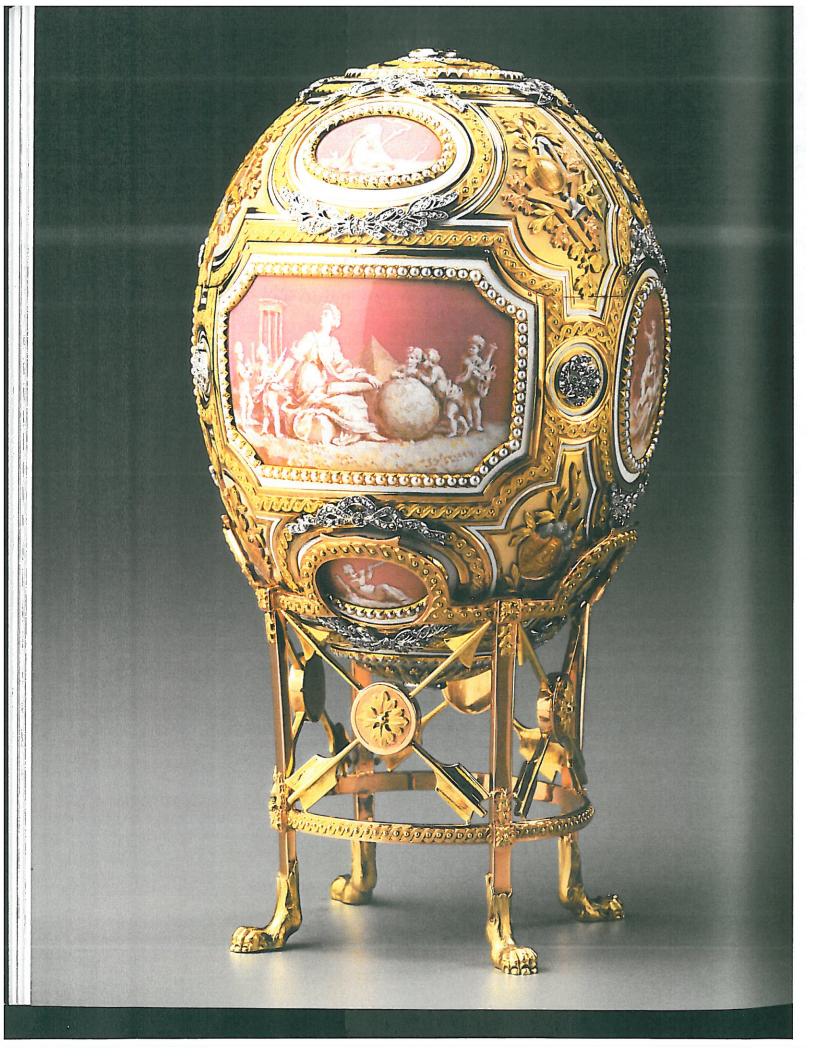




Fig. 11.1 Hillwood founder Marjorie Merriweather Post in the Icon Room at her estate, circa 1968. On the table are lapis lazuli candelabra from the Winter Palace sold at Lepke in 1928, and on the wall hangs a tapestry she purchased at Galerie d'Art Ancien in Paris in 1937. Photo: Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

American museums. Marjorie Merriweather Post, whose Russian collection at Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens in Washington, D.C., is the largest and most comprehensive of its kind, began seriously buying Russian art only in 1937, when she arrived in Moscow as the wife of Ambassador Joseph E. Davies, just as the source of desirable objects was about to dry up (Fig. 11.1).2 Nonetheless, she continued to collect from Western dealers and at auction until about 1970, shortly before her death. She was by far the most significant collector of Russian art in the United States. Henry Walters first purchased gifts from Fabergé's St. Petersburg shop in 1912, but only later bought most of his Russian collection, in Paris in 1928 and 1929 at the end of his life. Walters, like Post would do in Washington, created his own museum in Baltimore, in 1934. India Early Minshall, Lillian Thomas Pratt, and Matilda Geddings Gray acquired their Fabergé collections in the 1930s from Armand and Viktor Hammer, who were instrumental in creating a Russian art market in the United States. Ralph Bartlett, a Boston dealer who bequeathed his unsold stock to Dartmouth College in 1958, and Byzantinist Thomas Whittemore, who donated rare silver bratiny and kovshi to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, had business or charitable projects in Russia before and after the revolution. Many émigrés managed to bring personal belongings out of Soviet Russia. Most of these collections ended up on the market, as their

owners were obliged to "eat their jewels," as the expression went. The collection of Nancy Leeds Wynkoop, granddaughter of Grand Duke Georgii Mikhailovich, was kept mostly intact and donated to the Middlebury College Museum of Art between 1993 and 2006.

Russian art migrated to the West after 1917 through various routes, as discussed in this volume. In Russia, Soviet authorities sold to Western dealers and tourists primarily through Antikvariat and later in the 1930s through the Torgsin, Trade with Foreigners, stores. They also sold through the major auction houses of Berlin and Vienna. From these venues, art works spread throughout Europe and to the United States. The Soviets also sold through middlemen, including Armand Hammer, Norman Weisz, and numerous other concessionaires.

The formation of major Russian collections abroad provides case studies of the various ways in which Russian art found a place in American museums. Several of the collectors had personal experience in Russia, where they bought their objects or were inspired by Russian art. Others depended for their first exposure on new American dealers of Russian art, like Armand Hammer and Alexander Schaffer. Two collectors formed their own museums; the rest donated their art to museum collections. Marjorie Merriweather Post remains an exception, because she continued to collect for two decades after World War II. As a result, the objects she acquired had often been through several hands.

The Davies in Moscow

The collection of Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens presents an ideal starting point for an exploration of American interest in Russian art, because it is the largest and most studied, and because the pieces come from a variety of sources. Marjorie Merriweather Post did not, as a tenacious myth would have one believe, dock her yacht, the *Sea Cloud*, in front of the Hermitage in Leningrad in 1938, load all the Russian art now at Hillwood on board, and sail home. She purchased the nucleus of her Russian collection, about 20 percent, while in Moscow, but she acquired most of it, including the most important works, over the next thirty years at auction and from dealers in New York, London, and Paris.

Post did not arrive in Moscow ready to build a collection of Russian art. Encouraged by her father, she had already assembled a fine collection of French furniture, porcelain, and gold boxes during the preceding fifteen years. She was surprised to find when she got to the Soviet Union how strongly European tastes had influenced Russian art and how appropriately Russian furnishings fit into her French-style interiors. She had, however, already acquired two works by the firm of Fabergé and had met former Russian royalty who had fled the Bolshevik regime. Post had been in a group that welcomed

Princess Ksenia Georgievna (mother of Nancy Wynkoop) to Palm Beach in 1923.³ In 1929 she hosted a luncheon at Palm Beach for Grand Duke Aleksandr Mikhailovich,⁴ and Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna gave a talk at Post's home in New York in 1931 to aid a hospital charity.⁵ Many Americans, with no royalty of their own, were easily sympathetic and attracted to foreign royals in distress. The lure of Russian "princesses" on American soil was, and still is, a powerful magnet. Post was particularly susceptible.

By the late 1930s, shopping for art and antiques in Moscow meant frequenting the state-run commission shops, and less often, the state storerooms, when they were opened for diplomats. Here all goods were priced in rubles, but at a low official rate intended only for foreign residents of the Soviet Union. The Torgsin stores, which had sold art for hard currency, had closed two years before the Davies arrived in Moscow, leaving Post to lament missed opportunities to shop there. Davies complained in a letter to his daughter that the commission shops had been fairly well picked over. Post, during her eighteen months in Moscow, purchased numerous porcelain cups and saucers; plates from the order services; silver cups, beakers, and tankards; icons, liturgical textiles, and chalices; and some furniture and porcelain vases. Only such things remained available in 1937.

Post considered the tour in Moscow a great adventure, as she picked through the piles of objects for sale. Icons and other religious items, things she had never previously collected, became symbolic of this experience. Davies enjoyed the hunt as much as Post did and was more passionate about icons than his wife was. In fact, within two weeks of their arrival in Moscow, Davies had conceived a plan to collect socialist realist paintings and icons for his alma mater, the University of Wisconsin. Two months later, he sent Wisconsin governor Phillip La Follette a proposal to donate his collection. In April, he took the paintings and icons to Washington, D.C., for display in the East Room of the White House so President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and first lady Eleanor Roosevelt could enjoy them before their shipment to Wisconsin. Davies donated 122 pieces in all, including 23 icons, to the Elvehjem Museum of the University of Wisconsin, where they remain today.

Always interested in textiles, Post purchased the approximately twenty-seven vestments and many more altar cloths currently in the Hillwood collection. She found them piled in heaps in the commission shops. In March 1937, Davies wrote in his diary, "The 'party' is putting on a drive to destroy all except the most artistic icons, priests' robes, chalices, and the like. It seems a pity that these should be destroyed. I have made a request that we be allowed to purchase some of these sacred relics and I think that the permission will be allowed us. If we can do so, we will save for ultimate sacred purpose some at least of these beautiful things of the religious life of old Russia." 10

Davies clearly believed that they were "saving" many of the religious

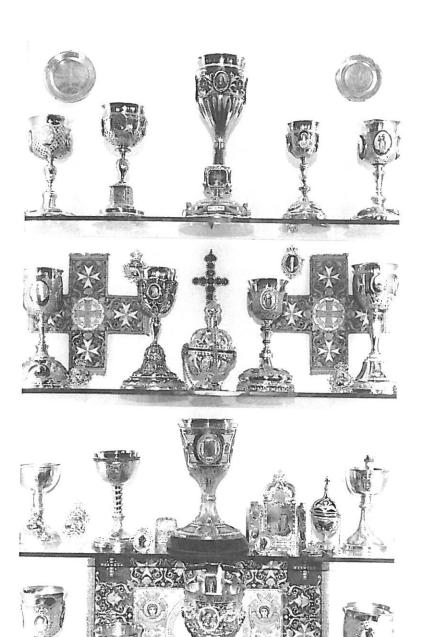


Fig. 11.2 Icon Room vitrine at Hillwood with chalices, censers, and chalice covers, late 1950s. Photo: Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

wares. A few days earlier, he had noted in his diary that "Marjorie and I shopped to 'rescue from the burning' such priests' robes as we could find in the State warehouses." They also purchased at least twenty-three silver chalices at commission shops in Moscow (Fig. II.2). In one of her Moscow scrapbooks, Post described finding them:





Fig. 11.3 Cabinet, 1873, attributed to Nichols and Plinke, St. Petersburg. Ippolit Monigetti (1819–1878), designer. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 32.22.

During the early days of our stay in Russia—they were clearing State Store rooms to create new museums—to further augment the old ones—So! One day we were taken by Bender [Davies' aide and translator who worked for the U.S. embassy but also reported to the NKVD, the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, or secret police] to the State Store room—Fairy tales of robber caves—had nothing on this place room after room with rough board shelves each one loaded—great boxes on the floor with lovely silver things tea-coffee pots tankards vodka cups, etc.—shelves of china & glass—priest's robes & and church embroideries. It was here that we found the chalices looking like pewter—filthy dirty all pushed under a table—We were allowed to poke & dig—& pile what we wished together & the commission would sit (they were in full outside attire, caps and mufflers complete) drink tea—smoke—yell at each other & eventually we would have a price—Chalices—old-new—jeweled or not—were a ruble a gram—weighed on a feed store scale.¹²

Some of the liturgical objects had probably been confiscated in 1922 and had languished in Gokhran, the State Depository of Valuables, for lack of buyers. More likely, however, they came from churches closed in 1929 and 1930. In any event, all but one of these objects at Hillwood date to before 1830. The experts viewed anything produced after this to be of no artistic value and subject to melting down for scrap. Later, Davies would witness the desperate situation of the church firsthand during a trip he made with his daughter Emlen to Dnepropetrovsk, in southern Russia. There she was given some icons in an old Orthodox church that had been turned into an atheist museum.

Among the more important pieces Post purchased while in Moscow is a Renaissance-style chest, a cabinet, of ebonized wood set with lapis lazuli panels mounted in gilt bronze (Fig. 11.3). Alexander II and his wife, Maria Alexandrovna, presented this chest to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich, Alexander's brother, and his wife, Aleksandra Iosifovna, for their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary in 1873. According to oral history, portraits of each were fitted into the four ovals on the front of the chest; these had been removed by the time the chest arrived at Spaso House, the American ambassador's Moscow residence. Post had Belgian lapis set into the empty holes when the couple reached Brussels in 1938. Konstantin and his heirs owned three major properties—Pavlovsk, the Marble Palace, and Strel'na—in or near St. Petersburg. The chest was most likely at the Marble Palace on the Neva embankment. 17

While in the Soviet Union, Post also acquired several porcelain vases produced at the Imperial Porcelain Factory. She purchased a large white vase that belonged to a banquet service that Alexander II ordered for his boyhood friend Field Marshall Prince Aleksandr Bariatinskii (Fig. 11.4). The vase, one

Fig. 11.4 Vase from the service for Field Marshal Prince Aleksandr Bariatinksii, 1860s, Imperial Porcelain Factory, St. Petersburg. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 25.348.



of four, had been on view at Mar'ino, the Bariatinskii estate in Kursk province, where the prince had assembled a large collection of paintings, books, and other objects. In 1918, threatened by Germans or revolutionary sailors in the area, the local peasants sent an emissary to Moscow to Narkompros, the Peo-

ple's Commissariat of Enlightenment, with a request to register the collection and remove it to the capital for safekeeping as it had already been robbed. Despite the continuation of the war in the area, specialists from the museum section retrieved the objects and delivered them to Mosgosfond, the Moscow branch of Gosfond, the State Reserve. From there, the objects, paintings and books were dispersed to various museums. Some furniture, vases, and clocks were turned over to the Kursk and Pyl'skii *krai* (local) museums. Some, like the Hillwood vase, undoubtedly remained in Mosgosfond for future sale.

Both sides of the vase are decorated with a crowned ornament composed of the crossed batons of a field marshal, the chain of St. Andrew, and the star of the Order of St. George. Someone, however, attempted to obliterate the crowns. In a 1938 inventory of objects in the Davies' Brussels residence—he had been reassigned to the Belgian capital in June 1938—a note in Post's hand next to the entry on the vase reads, "Rule, no eagles or crowns." Obviously she had seen other defaced objects as well.

Post bought a pair of vases with a frieze of splendidly painted pigeons in the Leningrad Antikvariat store. Perhaps more unusual is the acquisition of large palace-sized vases now at Hillwood. Post's daughter Eleanor had actually traveled to the Soviet Union in 1931 or 1932, before her mother. According to Eleanor, she had seen these vases in her hotel, probably the Grand Hotel Europe. She told the manager how much she admired them, to which he replied that she could purchase them if she wanted. When Eleanor told him that she only had \$75 left, he said that was fine, so she bought them. Shipping them to the United States cost much more than the vases did.

Hillwood has few records of what the Davies acquired in the Soviet Union. 20 One must therefore rely on the stories Post told about buying vestments and chalices as well as several other important pieces. Determining what the Davies bought is complicated further by their extensive travels throughout Europe, where they regularly took the opportunity to shop and to indulge their newfound interest in Russian art. The Davies spent much of summer 1937 on the *Sea Cloud* sailing from one Baltic port to another. President Roosevelt sent Davies on a mission to Helsinki, Stockholm, Oslo, Tallinn, Riga, and several other cities to meet with leaders in an attempt to ascertain the German government's intentions. Not only did they pursue answers to Roosevelt's inquiry, but spent ample time in the antique shops as well.

In fall 1937, Post went to Vichy, France, for a rest. There she found a large leather trunk with about twenty pieces of the rare Orlov porcelain service that Catherine the Great had presented to her favorite, Grigorii Orlov, after the successful coup that placed her on the throne (Fig. 11.5). In 1928 twenty-two pieces from the Orlov Service were exhibited in Brussels in the

Fig. 11.5 Orlov Service, 1762–1765, Imperial Porcelain Factory, St. Petersburg, in a traveling case not original to the eighteenth century. Marjorie Merriweather Post found the service in Vichy, France, in 1937. Photo: Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

Fig. 11.6 Vase (one of a pair), 1836, Imperial Porcelain Factory, St. Petersburg. Nikolai Kornilov (1797–1852), painter. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 25.324.1.



exhibition *Art russe*: *ancien et moderne*. A year later, they appeared in the *Exposition de céramiques russes anciennes* at the Musée Céramique de Sèvres.²² These appear to be the tea pieces Post bought in Vichy, but with the addition of two plates. At the time of the revolution, the Orlov-Davydovs had apparently stored some of their treasures at the Italian embassy in St. Petersburg for safekeeping.²³ In 1919 the state confiscated art being held in foreign embassies, and the Orlov Service was turned over to the Hermitage. Accord-

ing to the Hermitage inventories—Hillwood's plates have inventory numbers on them—Hillwood's plates were transferred to the Russian Museum in 1932, so they could not have been included in the exhibitions in Brussels and Sèvres; they must have been added to the set between 1932 and 1937, when Post bought it. When the rest of the set left Russia is not known, but its pre-revolutionary location must have been the Orlov-Davydov residence in St. Petersburg.

In June 1938, Paulina Zhemchuzhina (Madame Molotova), whose husband was soon to become the Soviet foreign minister, presented on behalf of the Soviet government a pair of vases to Post just before her departure from the Soviet Union (Figs. 11.6 and 11.7).²⁴ Apparently such vases were common presents to important government officials. Aleksandr Mosiakin claims that Averill Harriman, among others, received such significant gifts.25 Such was the fate of hundreds of treasures from private homes. Before the revolution, these vases, made in the Imperial Porcelain Factory and painted in 1836, belonged to the collection of Vladimir O. Girshman, a Moscow entrepreneur, friend of Valentin Serov, and well-known collector of symbolist paintings (Fig. II.8). 26 Authorities seized his collection in March 1919, and for a few months that fall, his house was the Museum of Furniture. It was soon closed, however, and his fine collection of Russian furniture, including possibly the vases, was designated to go to a new museum of decorative art in the Alexander Palace in the Neskuchnyi Sad that opened in May 1921.27 Regardless of whether they actually made it to this museum, they were ultimately transferred to the Museum of Ceramics at Kuskovo, though the curators there appear to have no information about when exactly they entered the collection.

In return for the vases, Post presented to the ceramics museum at Kuskovo a set of six Lenox plates with scenes of New York City. As soon as she arrived in Belgium, after her husband's Moscow posting, she also sent a



Fig. 11.7 Letter from Paulina Zhemchuzhina (Madame Molotova) on giving a pair of vases on behalf of the Soviet government to Marjorie Post Davies in 1938. Photo: Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

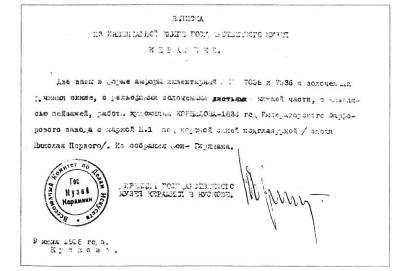


Fig. 11.8 Inventory document from the Museum of Ceramics at Kuskovo describing the vases presented to Marjorie Post Davies by the Soviet government and providing their provenance as once a part of the collection of Vladimir O. Girshman. Photo: Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

collection of American cut glass and early American pottery (twenty-five pieces total, valued at \$1,376.00), and in 1943 she announced the donation of four more pieces of Sandwich glass, to be sent to the museum after the war.²⁸ Although the Lenox plates remain at Kuskovo, the curators there know nothing about the glass. Apparently it vanished into the Ministry of Culture.

That the Davies received advice on buying icons from Tret'iakov curators, access to state storerooms, and gifts from Soviet leaders was more than the good fortune of a well-placed collector. Soviet leaders had every reason to be solicitous of the Davies. The ambassador was, after all, a personal friend of President Roosevelt, and he was positively disposed toward the Soviets and their social experiment.²⁹ Learning that the Davies were enthusiastic collectors, not only of pre-revolutionary art, but also of socialist realist paintings, it was in the Soviet leaders' interest to encourage their pursuits.³⁰

Later Post Purchases

Unlike other ambassadors, embassy staff, and journalist collectors, of which there were many, the Davies and then Post herself continued to collect Russian art long after they returned home from their tour. Moscow was only the beginning. Post would continue to buy Russian art for the rest of her life. She divorced Davies in 1955, and in 1958 she hired a curator, Marvin Ross, to help her find significant additions for her collection.

Liturgical Art, the Nuptial Crown, and Fabergé

By the mid-1950s, Post had decided that her home and the French and Russian collections in it would become a museum. Post carefully added to her already strong collection of ecclesiastical objects. The icons and church plate she purchased in the 1960s shared a similar provenance. Confiscated at the same time as her earlier acquisitions, these passed through several hands before reappearing at auction and in antique stores.

In 1929 the Soviet authorities ordered the destruction of the very wealthy Chudov monastery in the Kremlin, and many of its artifacts were sold, including a censer now at Hillwood made in 1797 by the Moscow silversmith I. P. Krag. Metropolitan Platon, who tutored Paul I and presided over his coronation, presented the censer to the monastery on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. Emanuel Snowman of Wartski in London acquired it, probably on one of his regular trips to the Soviet Union, and put it on view at the *Exhibition of Russian Art: 1 Belgrave Square* in 1935 in London. Who owned it between then and 1969, when Post bought it at auction, is not known.³²

Two gold chalices at Hillwood were most likely confiscated in 1922 at the time of the seizures from the leading churches and monasteries. One, made by the famous goldsmith Iver Winfeldt Buch, was a gift to the Aleksandr Nevskii Lavra by Catherine the Great in 1791 (Fig. 11.9). Count Nikolai

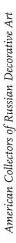




Fig. 11.9 Chalice, 1791, St. Petersburg. Iver Windfeldt Buch (1749–1811), maker. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 11.223.

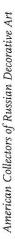
Rumiantsev presented the other to St. Petersburg's Kazan' Cathedral in 1824 in memory of his mother. Both chalices were well known at the time of the revolution; the Buch chalice had been on view in a 1915 exhibition of liturgical wares at the Shtiglits Museum, and the Kazan' chalice had been illustrated in a 1911 volume about the cathedral.³³ The Buch chalice appears on a 1922

list of objects in the lavra to be disposed of for famine relief.³⁴ Many confiscated liturgical objects were shown at a special exhibition at the Hermitage in fall 1922; neither of these chalices was included.³⁵ Kenneth Snowman of Wartski in London informed the Hillwood curatorial office that his father had brought the Buch chalice out of the Soviet Union in 1925 or 1926 and that it had remained in Wartski's collection until Post purchased it in 1967.³⁶ The other pieces of this liturgical set, as well as another set Buch made at the same time for the Dormition Cathedral in the Kremlin, have disappeared altogether.

In Paris in 1927, "accredited members of the Soviet Government" sold the gold chalice from the Kazan' Cathedral to Emanuel Snowman along with about eighty other objects (mostly by Fabergé and "modern") that "could comfortably be stowed in a Gladstone bag." According to Wartski's records, a Mr. Bradshaw, a passionate collector of Russian decorative art, bought it in 1939. Later, Wartski reacquired much of the Bradshaw collection. Sometime after that, it must have been sold to Helen de Kay, the wealthy widow of the former counsel of the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company who had a large collection of jewels and art. Post purchased it from her estate in 1966.

The disposition of the crown jewels, as is known, was a constant source of debate. They had been removed from the Winter Palace to the Kremlin Armory in 1914 for safekeeping. There they remained undisturbed until spring 1922, when they were inventoried. The inventory was published in 1925, and the jewels put on display.³⁹ In March 1927, as the regime geared up for the First Five-Year Plan (1928–1932), a selection of crown jewels, including the nuptial crown worn by Alexandra at her wedding to Nicholas II, was sold at Christie's in London (Fig. 11.10). A syndicate of jewelers, headed by Norman Weisz of Hatton Gardens, the jewelry center of London, had purchased the jewels from the Soviet state for the sale. 40 The French dealer George Malcolm Founess bought the crown at the auction. According to Hans Nadelhoffer, Pierre Cartier found the crown in a Parisian antique store and took it to Cartier's New York store, where it was thought there would be a better market.41 It later ended up in the collection of Helen de Kay. Post purchased it from the de Kay estate in 1966 at the same time she bought the Kazan' chalice.42

Weisz's relationship with the Soviet authorities is not clear, but he was probably a middleman-entrepreneur working with Anastas Mikoian to facilitate the sale of art in the West. In July 1927, he bought jewels from the Soviets that had belonged to the khan of Khiva and sold them in London. In late 1928, he arranged the sale of the furnishings from the Palei Palace in Tsarskoe Selo. Princess Olga Palei, morganatic wife of Grand Duke Paul, brother of Alexander III, sued Weisz, claiming the items as personal property. She lost the suit, however, and the sale went forward the following



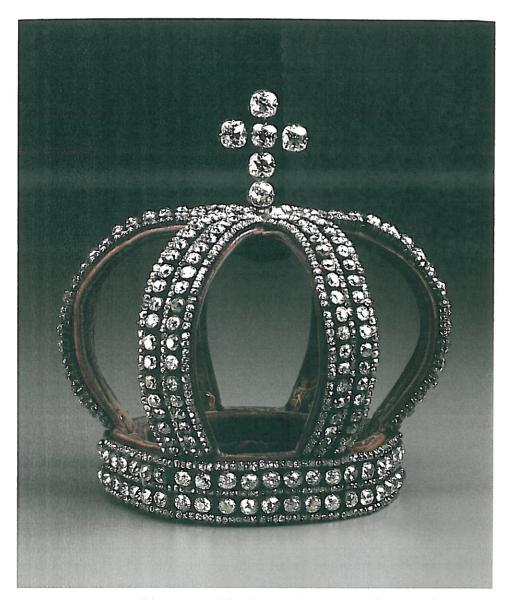
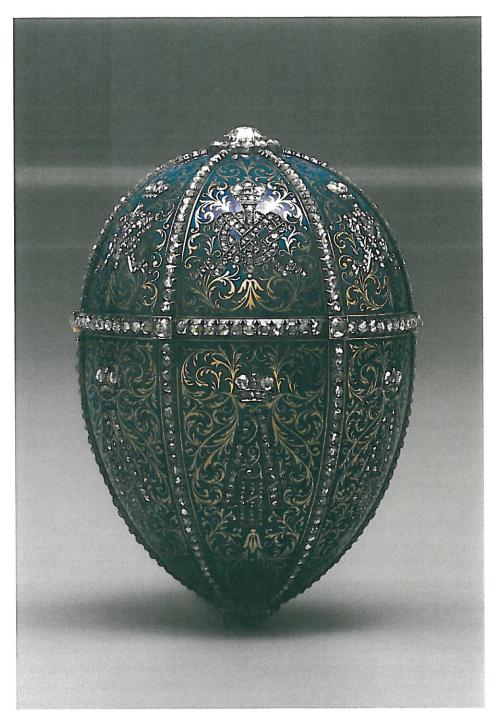


Fig. 11.10 Nuptial crown, 1884, St. Petersburg. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.63.

spring. Quite possibly many of the forty-eight pieces of historical Russian glass that Post purchased in 1970 from the personal collection of Berthe and Alexandre Popoff in Paris came from this collection.⁴⁵ Weisz was also a potential buyer for the furnishings at Pavlovsk, but the Soviets ultimately decided that that collection was too important to be sold.⁴⁶ Weisz's name also pops up in connection with the sale of the imperial Easter eggs made by Fabergé.⁴⁷

The eggs, although modern in 1922, were treated much like the crown jewels. In September 1917, the Provisional Government ordered that the eggs belonging to Alexandra in the Alexander Palace and those of Maria Fedorovna in the Anichkov Palace and Gatchina be brought to the Kremlin Armory for safekeeping. Neither of Maria's two residences was as well-guarded as the Alexander Palace, and eight eggs went missing, all of them belonging to Maria. The eggs were turned over to the Sovnarkom, the Council of People's

Fig. 11.11 Twelve Monogram Easter egg, 1895, firm of Fabergé, St. Petersburg. Mikhail Perkhin, (1860–1903), workmaster. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 11.63.



Commissars, at the same time as the crown jewels and appear in several photographs together with them (see the Introduction, Fig. 4). None was sold at this time. Some, however, were given to the Moskovskoe Iuvelirnoe Tovarishchestvo, the Moscow Jewelry Conglomerate, including the Catherine the Great Easter egg, now at Hillwood (opposite page 265). This egg had been a gift in 1914 from Nicholas II to his mother. It was one of eight returned to the armory in 1927. Its surprise, an automated sedan chair, had been sepa-

rated from it before its arrival at the armory. In 1930 experts from Antikvariat picked out eleven eggs for sale, including the Hillwood egg, and on April 30, 1930, Armand Hammer purchased the Catherine egg along with nine others for 8,000 rubles.⁴⁸ He sold the egg the next year to Post's daughter Eleanor.⁴⁹

Other dealers were also active in disposing of the imperial Easter eggs. Emanuel Snowman negotiated the purchase of nine eggs, including some of the best. Aleksandr Polovtsov (also Polovtsoff, 1867–1944), formerly curator of the Shtiglits Museum in St. Petersburg and "commissar curator" of Pavlovsk from 1917 to 1918, became a dealer in Paris in the 1920s. He acquired two eggs and sold both to the Baltimore collector Henry Walters. Hillwood's Twelve Monogram egg, given by Nicholas and Alexandra to Maria Fedorovna in 1895, has, by contrast, very little history (Fig. 11.11). According to Valentin Skurlov, it was kept at the Anichkov Palace until 1917, but it does not appear on the inventory of 1917; it did not arrive at the Kremlin Armory with the rest of the Easter eggs. To It disappeared again until 1949, when Post purchased it from Mrs. G. V. Berechielli in Italy. Post's friend Frances Rosso, the American wife of a former Italian ambassador to the Soviet Union, may well have introduced her to this woman.

Post already owned two works by Fabergé when she arrived in Moscow in 1937. One is the Catherine the Great Easter egg, the other a small box mounted with an Indian mogul carved spinel on the lid (Fig. 11.12). Post purchased the box in 1926 at Cartier in New York, where Feliks Iusupov was selling jewels and other objects that he had managed to take out of the country. There is no evidence that Post bought any of her Fabergé pieces in the Soviet Union. Like most American collectors, she acquired them from Hammer, Schaffer, Snowman, and other dealers who had bought them from the Soviets in the late 1920s and early 1930s. She also received many works made by the firm as gifts. Davies gave her a Fabergé clock, which he had purchased at Wartski in London for her birthday in Moscow in 1938. In 1937 on her fiftieth birthday, Patsy the dog "gave" her a Fabergé pen holder, while the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, Mikhail Kalinin, gave her an enameled Easter egg (although not by Fabergé) and with it a poem:

This may be an egg of czarist times But Kalinin wishes to say in rhymes The birthday wishes of snowy climes.⁵³

The commissar of foreign trade, Anastas Mikoian, also gave her an egg, but no poem.

Furniture and Porcelain

The Hillwood collection includes two items from the first of the famous Rudolph Lepke sales, held in Berlin in 1928: a pair of lapis lazuli candelabra

from the Winter Palace (see Fig. 11.1) and a gilt bronze table with a porcelain top from the Anichkov Palace. Both are in the popular Empire style, wide-spread across the continent in the early nineteenth century, and their country of origin was uncertain until quite recently. Some time following the sale, the candelabra came into the hands of J. Kugel of Paris, a firm specializing in fine Russian objects. A group of Post's friends presented them to her on her eightieth birthday in March 1967. Recent research confirms that the candelabra are of Russian workmanship and were displayed in the large drawing room of Empress Alexandra, also known as the Raspberry Drawing Room, in the Winter Palace. 55

The Berlin-made porcelain-top table (erroneously identified in the Lepke catalogue as Russian) was commissioned in 1817 as part of the dowry of Alexandra Fedorovna, wife of Nicholas I. ⁵⁶ The table was part of the furnishings of the Anichkov Palace, the imperial couple's residence after their marriage. Following the revolution, the Anichkov Palace was turned into the Muzei Goroda, or City Museum. After ten years as a successful and popular museum, the historic rooms were closed in 1928 and the furnishings distributed to other museums or sold. ⁵⁷ A set of four nesting tables at Hillwood also came from the Anichkov Palace. ⁵⁸ Designed by Nikolai Nabokov and made by the St. Petersburg workshop of Nikolai Svirskii in 1882, they have marquetry tops with the inlaid cipher of Maria Fedorovna. Armand Hammer exhibited them in 1933 at Lord & Taylor, where India Early Minshall of Cleveland purchased them. Later she began to sell off some of her non-Fabergé objects, and in 1956 Post bought the tables with A La Vieille Russie acting as middleman.

On the whole, the more important and valuable an object, the easier its provenance is to trace. Hillwood is fortunate to have inventory numbers on some pieces of porcelain and the furniture noted above, because they are a tremendous help in determining where they were at the time of the revolution, when they were deaccessioned, and to whom. For example, the collection includes a large number of plates from the so-called order services, made for the banquets that Catherine the Great inaugurated for the knights of the Russian orders of St. Andrew, St. Aleksandr Nevskii, St. George, and St. Vladimir.59 These include eight plates made by the Imperial Porcelain Factory as additions (during the reign of Alexander II) to the service for the Order of St. Aleksandr Nevskii, with Winter Palace inventory numbers on them. They had all been transferred to Gosfond by 1926, when the first calls went out for duplicates to be deaccessioned. In fact, the Winter Palace inventory reveals that all 605 pieces from this service had been removed at the same time, including pieces made in the eighteenth century by the Gardner Factory as well as the later additions. 60 Hillwood owns fourteen pieces from the Cabinet Service that still bear their Winter Palace inventory numbers.

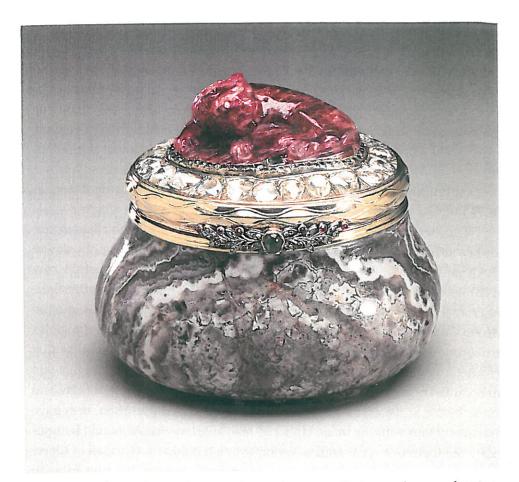


Fig. 11.12 Box, 1886–1896, firm of Fabergé, St. Petersburg. MIkhail Perkhin, workmaster. Feliks Iusupov brought this box out of Russia and sold it through Cartier in New York. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 11.62.

(Most porcelains do not have such numbers, applied in red enamel paint, because they were easy to wash off, and many people did so, being unaware of their purpose.) With the exception of three pieces, these plates, bowls, platters, and a monteith were transferred to Gostorg, the State Import-Export Trading Office, on August 17, 1927. A bowl, a plate, and the monteith were transferred to the Russian Museum considerably later, on April 7, 1932, and clearly never entered the collection.

These documented cases of porcelain from large banquet services being transferred out of the Hermitage confirm the figures provided by Elena Solomakha regarding the dispersal of the large palace services, porcelain, glass, and silver. Between 1926 and 1928, 3,652 silver objects and 9,849 pieces from porcelain services were transferred from the storerooms or pantries of the Winter Palace to state channels for sale. The large banquet services were the most vulnerable when the order came to get rid of all duplicates. Much of the porcelain ended up on the domestic market. Immediately after the revolution, parts of services had already found their way into the homes of ordinary people or into local cafeterias for daily use. For example, Tatiana Chernavina, later a curator at the Hermitage, describes a summer she spent at Pavlovsk living in a student hostel in the old Konstantin Palace. She wrote,

"We ate and drank . . . out of magnificent Sèvres china with the Imperial coatof-arms.... Little was left of this service by the autumn."64 The Soviet leadership also appears to have graced its banquet tables with imperial porcelain. In 1937 Post attended a seated dinner for 400 given by Foreign Minister Maksim Litvinov for the Finnish minister. She noted that all the courses were served on the "tsar's blue and gold china, which was too lovely for words."65

It is obvious from these examples that Post was particularly interested in objects with an imperial connection. Such objects found their way into her collection through a whole variety of routes. Post often said she had acquired pieces from the order services, which she used for dining, in eleven different countries. She was not only a well-traveled collector, but she also followed the auctions in New York and London, and her New York apartment was located practically next door to A La Vieille Russie, on Fifth Avenue. Furthermore, throughout the 1960s, Marvin Ross regularly directed her attention to important pieces coming onto the market as significant additions to her future museum.

Henry Walters

Henry Walters (1848–1931) is the only other collector of Russian art in the United States who founded his own museum. He represents an interesting contrast to Post in that he bought all his Russian works of art, it would appear, from the same dealer, and he was not especially interested in objects for their imperial connection. He did buy two of the imperial Easter eggs: the Gatchina egg, which Nicholas II gave to his mother in 1901, and the Rose Trellis egg, which he presented to his wife, Alexandra, in 1907. For the most part, however, Walters acquired his Russian pieces within the context of his overall collecting scheme. He was creating a universal museum, building on the collection started by his father. Its strengths lay in medieval and eighteenth-century decorative arts, especially enamels, ivories, miniatures, porcelain, and silver, in addition to paintings. 66 Thus he bought Russian enamels made at the end of the seventeenth century in the northern Russian town of Solvychegodsk, seat of the Stroganov family, and eighteenth-century enamels made in the nearby town of Velikii Ustiug, seeing them as important to appreciating the enameling tradition in Europe. 67

Walters was very secretive about his purchases and the prices he paid; he destroyed all the invoices. Once he found a dealer he liked and could trust, he relied heavily on him. This was clearly the case with Aleksandr Polovtsov, from whom he probably acquired all his Russian objects in 1928 and 1929. Even before the revolution, Polovtsov, the Russian émigré-turned-dealer, possessed extensive knowledge of the antique trade, especially in Paris, having done much of the buying for the Shtiglits Museum from dealers such as Jacques Seligman. In 1918 he gave part of his personal collection to the museum, whose collections were transferred to the Hermitage in 1923. Nothing has been published about how Polovtsov acquired the works he sold. A 1973 letter from Marvin Ross to Richard H. Randall, Jr., the director of the Walters Art Gallery, suggests that Walters may have bought some things from A La Vieille Russie in Paris with Polovtsov doing the selecting. Polovtsov was actively involved in organizing Art russe: ancien et moderne in Brussels in 1928 and Exhibition of Russian Art: 1 Belgrave Square in London in 1935, two of the major exhibitions of Russian art in the West. He was in charge of selecting objects for the London exhibition.

One thing is clear. Polovtsov knew Russian decorative art very well and bought very well, as the Walters collection demonstrates. Two of Walters' acquisitions—a bratina made out of a coconut shell and mounted with bands of filigree enamel and a panagia decorated with enamel and gemstones—come from well-known Russian collections. Both are Moscow workmanship from the seventeenth century. The bratina is from the collection of Count Aleksandr Musin-Pushkin, and the panagia is from the Moscow collection of Ol'ga N. Bulygina.⁷¹ Both are known from exhibitions of Russian decorative art in Moscow and St. Petersburg in the early twentieth century. Walters' most important Russian purchase, once again from Polovtsov, is the magnificent gold potpourri that had once belonged to Grigorii Orlov. Made of gold with enamel plaques, it is the work of Jean-Pierre Ador, the most famous goldsmith of Catherine's reign. Before the revolution, the potpourri was part of the collection of the Orlov-Davydov family.⁷² This potpourri, like the bratina, was displayed in the 1904 St. Petersburg exhibition of Russian art treasures.⁷³

American Women Collect Fabergé

Three other American collectors—Lillian Thomas Pratt (1876–1947), India Early Minshall (1885–1965), and Matilda Geddings Gray (1885–1971) resembled Post in their drive to collect and in their interest in Fabergé. Of the three, Minshall collected most broadly, purchasing Russian porcelain, glass, and furniture.74 As Henry Hawley, former curator of the Cleveland Museum of Art, points out, Minshall steeped herself in pre-revolutionary history from a young age and even attempted to learn Russian, but she never visited the country. He calls her an "intellectual hobbyist."75 Like Post, Minshall too had made contact with former members of the imperial family, for whom she had enormous sympathy. In her case, it was relatives of Ekaterina Iurievskaia, long-time mistress and morganatic wife of Alexander II. Minshall made her first purchases in 1934 from Hammer Galleries in New York; her acquisitions of Fabergé were made later from A La Vieille Russie in New York. She had long admired the imperial Easter eggs, but being a woman of modest means did not purchase one until 1943, when she bought the Red Cross egg of 1915 from Alexander Schaffer. After her death in 1963, most of Minshall's Fabergé pieces went to the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the remainder went to the Western Reserve Historical Society. In 1988 the Historical Society sold its part of the collection at Christie's in New York.

Lillian Thomas Pratt—who acquired the largest Fabergé collection now housed in an American museum, the Virginia Museum of Fine Art—purchased her first pieces of Russian art and Fabergé at the famous 1933 exhibition organized by Armand Hammer at Lord & Taylor. Like many wealthy women of her generation, she frequented department stores such as Lord & Taylor for shopping as well as for entertainment, attending their exhibitions of antiques and exotic wares from distant places. While collecting over a period of ten years, Pratt acquired five of the imperial Easter eggs. She too was interested in imperial connections, and many of the picture frames she purchased contained photographs of members of the imperial family and have unconfirmed imperial provenances. Pratt bought primarily from two dealers: Hammer Galleries and Alexander Schaffer at A La Vieille Russie in New York.

Matilda Geddings Gray first ran into Armand Hammer at his display of Russian art at the 1933 *Century of Progress* exhibition in Chicago. Like Pratt and Post, Gray was already a collector before being attracted to Russian art. Whereas Post collected French eighteenth-century furniture, porcelain, and gold boxes, Pratt collected Americana, and Gray assembled eighteenth-century French works, English Regency silver, and works by the Mexican artist Diego Rivera. She was the only one, however, to have had some artistic training, as a potter at Sophie Newcomb College in New Orleans and as a bookbinder; she also studied sculpture.

A common appreciation of beautiful small objects and fine workmanship links these three women. Whereas Post received her initial Russian art education in Moscow, the three share a common tie in their early association with Armand Hammer and Alexander Schaffer. Surprising as it may seem for a woman who was herself a great shopper and an avid collector of French gold boxes, there is no evidence that Post visited the Lord & Taylor sales. It is possible that Post, always the businesswoman, was a shopper with a purpose, not for entertainment.

Viktor and Armand Hammer eventually sold all of their Russian wares. In a letter dated February 29, 1956, Viktor wrote Post, stating, "As you know, great Russian Imperial art objects are fast disappearing from the market, and in an effort to find other active art fields we have been acquiring important French impressionist paintings. Because of this we are interested in closing out what few outstanding objects we have left." To do that, the Hammers reduced the price of two Fabergé clocks made in the workshop of Julius Rappaport; one was a regimental clock, reduced from \$10,000 to \$4,400, including tax, and a rococo clock made for Maria Fedorovna, lowered from \$6,500

to \$3,850. Post bought the latter in 1956 and the former in 1957, a week before it was scheduled to appear in an advertisement in the *New York Times* offering it for sale. In addition to auctions at Christie's and Sotheby's, where Russian art was increasingly for sale after World War II, A La Vieille Russie remained the major source for American collectors.

Other Collectors

The Boston shop Old Russia often advertised next to A La Vieille Russie and Hammer Galleries in issues of the *Connoisseur* and the *Magazine Antiques* in the 1930s. Old Russia's proprietor, Ralph Bartlett (1866–1960), was trained as a lawyer, and became the guardian of the granddaughter of Ole Bull, the famous Norwegian violinist, after the settlement of the musician's estate. This occasioned his first trip abroad to Norway, leading eventually to his first trip to Russia in 1911. He became intrigued with Russian art and was obviously making trips there in the 1920s, because he opened his antique shop on Arlington Street in Boston in 1928. He closed it in 1939 when art could no longer be legally exported from the Soviet Union. In 1958 shortly before his death, Bartlett donated what remained of his collection to Dartmouth College.

How Bartlett began collecting and how he became as knowledgeable as he was is not clear. Much of the silver he purchased was from the Hermitage collection and made in the time of Catherine the Great. This may have been part of the 3,652 pieces that Solomakha mentions being disposed of between 1926 and 1928. Bartlett, like Snowman, Schaffer, and others, surely frequented the Antikvariat depot at the Novomikhailovskii Palace and later the Torgsin stores, where he may have found many of the pieces he bought with Winter Palace inventory numbers, including a silver gilt coffee pot at Hillwood made for the Empress Anna around 1735 (Fig. 11.13).

To finance some of the arrangements Dartmouth made with Bartlett at the time of his gift—for instance, to pay his hospital bills and cost of his funeral—the college sold some of his collection, mostly silver, to A La Vieille Russie in New York. These pieces came to the attention of Marvin Ross, who secured the coffee pot for Post in 1963. At the same time, Schaffer offered Post a second coffee pot bearing the cipher of Catherine the Great, but she was not interested. Bartlett was not an amateur buyer. He knew the famous Winter Palace inventory of silver published in 1907 by Baron Armin von Foelkersam and on the back of each object's photograph had added its inventory number. The Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth still holds some fine silver pieces and liturgical objects of the seventeenth through the nineteenth century.

Thomas Whittemore (1871–1950) is most famous for his restoration of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and for saving the bells of the Danilov

monastery. He arranged for these to be shipped to Harvard University and installed in the tower of Lowell House in 1930. Less well known is Whittemore's acquisition of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Russian silver, now at the Museum of Fine Art in Boston. Included in the donation he made to the museum are five seventeenth-century bratiny and three charki, all inscribed as belonging to the Troitse-Sergieva Lavra. (The inscription around the lip of each bratina reads "Bratina [or charka] of the Troitse-Sergieva Monastery.") Each object is hand-hammered silver that is perfectly plain except for the inscription, which is gilded. These drinking vessels are rare and were recorded in a 1925 study of the lavra's silver. Whittemore also donated a collection of eighteenth-century silver beakers, which he probably regarded as souvenirs of his travels and charity efforts on behalf of Russians.

Many Russian émigrés brought parts of their private collections out of Russia with them, but most, like the Iusupovs, had to sell them off, piece by piece, to support themselves in the West. One collection of family treasures and memorabilia remains partly intact in the Middlebury College Museum of Art.⁸³ The donor, Nancy Leeds Wynkoop, was the granddaughter of Grand Duke Georgii Mikhailovich. The grand duke's wife, Maria Georgievna (Princess Marie of Greece and Denmark), left Russia for England with her two daughters (one of whom, Ksenia, was Nancy Leeds' mother) in summer 1914 for a cure. While in England, World War I began. Maria never returned to Russia, nor did she see her husband again. He was killed in the Peter and Paul Fortress in 1919.

The objects in the collection, numbering about 100, include many pieces made by Fabergé, especially frames with family photos, small icons, and silverware. Maria no doubt carried some of these things with her, possibly a few Fabergé frames and traveling icons, when she went to England. Her mother, Queen Olga of Greece (Grand Duchess Olga Konstantinovna), who had returned to Russia in 1916, was apparently able to bring out many personal items as well. The dowager empress Maria Fedorovna took with her most of the grand duke's silver, which had been located in Harax, the couple's Crimean estate where the empress lived during her last weeks in Russia.

It is quite obvious that the routes along which Russian objects traveled after being seized or deaccessioned were often long and winding, with many stops along the way. At first, Europe was the initial entrepôt of art to the United States. By the late 1920s and early 1930s, the United States was becoming a favored venue despite the Great Depression. American dealers and tourists alike shopped at Antikvariat and Torgsin stores in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Hammer and Schaffer—critical to the collecting needs of Post, Gray, Pratt, and Geddings—were certainly also vital to hundreds of smaller collectors who fancied Russian artifacts. All the other collectors, with the exception perhaps of Walters, found their inspiration in their personal Russian experiences.



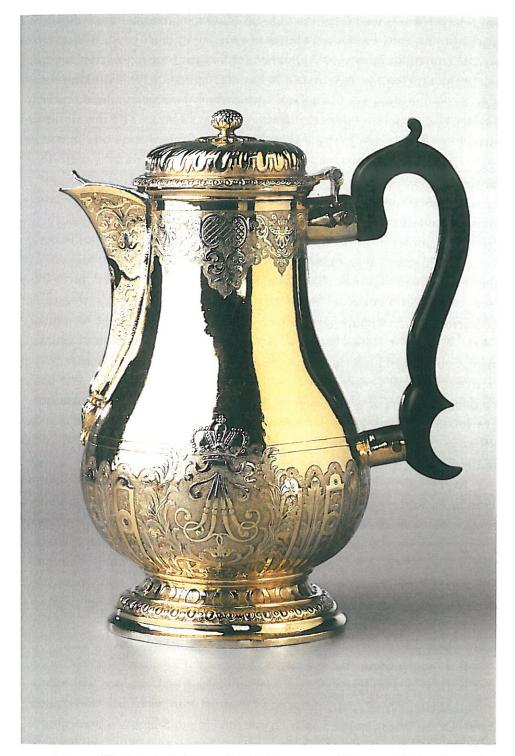


Fig. 11.13 Coffee pot, 1735, St. Petersburg. Nikolai Dom (active 1714–1748), maker. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 12.10.

Most of the kind of objects the Soviets were willing to sell date from the eighteenth century through the early twentieth century. This should come as no surprise, because many of these works of art, like those from the firm of Fabergé, were in fact new and little valued as historical or artistic relics. It is difficult to determine how much European decorative art was seized and is

now in the West beyond the famous Old Master paintings, some tapestries, and furniture, but one should not assume that every piece of Russian art now in the United States was sold after the revolution. One needs to remember the enormous number of objects that found their way to the West long before the revolution as part of the normal commerce between nations, the presentation of gifts to visiting dignitaries, and the dowries of Russian grand duchesses married to European royalty. Many of these came on the market with the defeat of the German monarchy and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Many post–World War II collectors, among them Jack and Belle Linsky, acquired Fabergé and eighteenth-century porcelain figures made by the Imperial Porcelain Factory; Lansdell Christie, another collector of Fabergé, purchased most of the Linsky collection when the Metropolitan Museum of Art did not want it. Both were dispersed in the 1960s.⁸⁴ Then there is the more recent Fabergé collection of Malcolm Forbes that was sold to Russian magnate Viktor Veksel'berg in 2004.

Most of the collections mentioned here have been kept intact as donations to museums. The significance of all of them is the role they have played in educating Americans about the beauty and history of Russian art. These objects are not lost to Russia and have led many to a passion for Russian culture. As Svetlana Boym, writing about nostalgia, notes, "In France it is not only the Ancien Régime that produced revolution, but in some respect the revolution produced the Ancien Régime, giving it a shape, a sense of closure, and a gilded aura." Post-revolutionary Russians saw only the decadence of the imperial regime and the gilded age, but for those Americans who formed collections of Russian art from the sales of the 1920s and 1930s, and more recently for all who have enjoyed the many art exhibitions from Russian museums, the romance with imperial Russia and the Romanov family has proved remarkably tenacious. •

- On the Russian style for export, see Anne Odom, "Russkii stil": The Russian Style for Export," Magazine Antiques, March 2003, 102–107.
- 2 Post was married four times. After her last divorce, she again used her maiden name. Here she will be referred to as Post, even when she was married to Davies.
- 3 New York Herald, February 17, 1923.
- 4 New York Herald-Tribune, March 1, 1929.
- New York Sun, June 18, 1931. Maria Pavlovna's memoir was published in 1931, and she may have been speaking about it at Post's apartment. Whether Post read hers or that of Grand Duke Aleksandr Mikhailovich is not known.
- 6 For Post's collection of icons, see Wendy R. Salmond, Russian Icons at Hillwood (Washington, D.C.: Hillwood Museum & Gardens, 1998).
- 7 Joseph E. Davies, Mission to Moscow (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1941), 30.
- 8 Ibid., 145.
- 9 See George Galavaris, Icons from the Elvehjem (Madison, Wisc.: Elvehjem Art Center, 1973).
- 10 Diary entry, March 21, 1937, in Davies, Mission to Moscow, 30. When Davies and Post divorced in 1955, they divided the Russian art that they had collected together. Davies died in 1958, having willed his share of the icons and chalices to the National Cathedral. These were sold at auction in 1980. Bishop Michael J. Dudick purchased some of them, which are now in the Episcopal and Heritage Libraries and Museum in Passaic, New Jersey. See "The Byzantine Episcopal and Heritage Institute Museum and Libraries," Eastern Catholic Life, February 13, 1994, 6.
- II Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Joseph E. Davies Papers, box 4, diary, March 15, 1937.
- 12 Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, "The Log," Post Family Papers, box 38, 1937.
- 13 M. J. Larsons, An Expert in the Service of the Soviet (London: Ernest Benn, 1929), 72. Larsons was the pseudonym under which Moisei lakovlevich Lazerson published his memoir.
- 14 Robert C. Williams, Russian Art and American Money, 1900–1940 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), 241–42.

- 15 Edward Owen is the photographer for all the color images of objects in the Hillwood collection.
- 16 Hillwood curatorial file 12.596. Purchased at Sotheby's London, December 8, 1969, lot 127.
- 17 A letter from Anatolii Kuchumov, former curator of Pavlovsk, to Marvin Ross, dated October 26, 1961, notes that the chest was never at Pavlovsk. See Hillwood file 32.22.
- 18 D. D. Lotareva, "Mar'ino: Usad'ba russkogo aristokrata," in Mir russkoi usad'by, ed. lu. A. Tikhonov (Moscow: Nauka, 1995). 172-73.
- 19 See Hillwood file 25.432.1–2. According to Rifat Gafifullin, some of the objects deaccessioned from Tsarskoe Selo were found in vitrines in the Grand Hotel Europe. See Rifat Gafifullin, "Kunst und Antiquitäten aus den Leningrader Schlossmuseen, 1926–1934," in Verkaufie Kultur: Die sowjetische Kunst- und Antiquitätenexporte, 1919–1938, ed. Waltraud Bayer (Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang, 2001), 78. These vases would not have fit in vitrines, but there were still large objects in hotel rooms in the 1970s.
- 20 No invoices cover her purchases in the Soviet Union. A missing invoice is, however, not proof that she purchased an object in Moscow. She received many objects, particularly those by Fabergé, as gifts. All these records were kept in her business office in downtown Washington, D.C. After her death, her curator, Marvin Ross, tried to collect all the invoices relating to the collection. Some surviving bills, however, are not specific enough to be enlightening—for instance noting "one Fabergé box," "one Fabergé frame"—and she also gave such pieces as presents to others.
- 21 The service was not known in Russia at the time of the 1904 exhibition celebrating the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Imperial Porcelain Factory, and it is not included in Baron fon Volf's famous history of the factory. It first came to light in 1912, when part of the service in the collection of Count V. A. Orlov-Davydov was included in the St. Petersburg exhibition Lomonosov and the Time of Elizabeth. See T. Kudriavtseva, "Orlovskii serviz imperatorskogo farforovogo zavoda v Peterburge," Soobshcheniia gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha, no. 49 (Leningrad, 1984), 23. **
- 22 In 1928 the pieces were identified as belonging to "M. Alexis Ouckkov [sic], Paris." In 1929 for the Sèvres exhibition, they were listed as belonging to Balachov-Ouchov, possibly the

- same person. See Exposition d'art russe ancien et moderne, organisée par le Palais des beaux arts de Bruxelles, 1928 (Brussels: E. Vain Buggenhoudt, 1928) and Denis Roche, Catalogue de l'Exposition de céramiques russes anciennes (Paris: Lapina and Fils, 1929).
- 23 T. A. Lesnikova writes about objects at Otrada, the Orlov-Davydov estate south of Moscow. When that estate was seized, some of the pieces there were apparently delivered to the Museum of Ceramics at Kuskovo and the State Historical Museum. It is unlikely that pieces were delivered from Otrada to the Italian embassy in Petrograd in 1918 or 1919, so the service, now considered historic, must have been broken up before the revolution. It is not impossible that some of the service was already out of the country. See "Otradinskoe sobranie grafov Orlovykh-Davydovykh," in Sud'by muzeinykh kollektsii, no. 7 (St. Petersburg: Tsarkoe Selo, 2001), 306.
- 24 Zhemchuzhina, who headed a cosmetic factory, personally presented Post with a fine Palekh lacquer box with three scenes from Alexander Pushkin's *The Stone Guest* on the lid. Inside is an inscription from Zhemchuzina to Mme. Davies, dated March 15, 1937. This was the date of Post's fiftieth birthday, so it was probably a birthday gift. The two women became very friendly during Post's stay in Moscow. Several Russian authors have made much of what they have referred to as an "engraving on the base" of the vase. In fact, Post had a small plaque attached to the gilt bronze base only in the 1960s, when she knew Hillwood would become a museum.
- 25 Aleksandr Mosiakin, "Prodazha," Ogonek, no. 8, February 1989, 29.
- 26 They appear to be the pair loaned by Girshman to the famous 1901 Historical Exhibition of Works of Art at the Stroganov Institute in Moscow. See D. Nikiforov, *Sokrovishcha v Moskve* (Moscow: Universitetskaia Tipografiia, 1901), 22.
- 27 E. M. Zents, "Istoriia odnoi kollektsii," Voprosy istorii 6 (1968): 205–206.
- 28 For the first shipment, see the bill from Fred Vogel of New York on September 8, 1938, Hillwood file 25.324, and the *New York Sun*, December 7, 1943.
- 29 A recent biography of Davies reevaluates his naive statements about the Soviet Union and the purges in light of what he considered his mission from Roosevelt to be—namely, to

- make friends with the Soviets. His personal messages to those surrounding Roosevelt were much more realistic. See Elizabeth Kimball MacLean, *Joseph E. Davies: Envoy to the Soviets* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1992).
- 30 Furthermore, Post and Davies were not ashamed of being capitalists. As Eugene Lyons commented, "Moscow simply adores foreign millionaires, having disposed summarily of its own crop." Foreign diplomats who "arrived without their stuffed shirts" regretted it. "They discovered in a hurry that Moscow expects from a capitalist nation a capitalist ambassador with all the bourgeois trimmings, rather than a denatured and watered-down specimen of the breed." In this article, "Moscow Likes Millionaires," Current History 46 (April 1937): 42, Lyons specifically talks about what a brilliant stroke it was to send Davies and Post to Moscow.
- 31 Post's friend Frances Rosso, the American woman married to Augusto Rosso, the Italian ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1936 to 1941, gave her collection to be housed at Hillwood. The icon collection of Ambassador Laurence A. Steinhardt, who succeeded Davies in Moscow, has been on loan to Hillwood. Both collections were assembled in Moscow. The long-time UPI correspondent Henry Shapiro and his wife collected porcelain figurines, including many from the Soviet period that are now at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York. See Deborah Sampson Shinn, Soviet Porcelains, 1918-1985 (Seattle: Cooper-Hewitt, National Museum of Design, 1992). Jean Herbette, French ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1924 to 1930, assembled a major collection of Russian and West European art during his tour in Moscow. His collection was sold at Christie's in Geneva on May 25 and 26, 1971. Six pieces of silver from his collection are now in the Frick Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. According to Géza von Habsburg, Herbette acquired items in Moscow on behalf of French dealers, sending objects to France via diplomatic pouch. See Géza von Habsburg, "When Russia Sold Its Past," Art and Auction, March 1995, 97.
- 32 Most of the objects discussed here are described in more detail in Anne Odom and Liana Paredes Arend, A Taste for Splendor: Russian Imperial and European Treasures from the Hillwood Museum (Alexandria, Va.: Art Services International, 1998). In some cases, new information supersedes what is presented

- 33 For the Buch chalice, see Nikolai Makarenko, "Vystavka tserkovnoi stariny v muzee Barona Shtiglitsa," Starye gody (July–August 1915), opposite p. 38, and for the Kazan' chalice, see Kazanskii sobor: Istoricheskoe issledovanie o sobore i ego opisanie (St. Petersburg: Izdano na sredstva Kazanskago sobora, 1911).
- 34 State Hermitage Archives (AGE), f. 4, op. 1, n. 992, l. 4.
- 35 Ibid., f. 1, op. 5-1982, n. 249/47.
- 36 See Hillwood file 11.223. Snowman wrote that his father often bought from "the Government Antiquariat [sic]."
- 37 "Russian Jewels, Royal Treasure Sold by Soviet," *Times* (London), November 26, 1927, 17.
- 38 Unfortunately the records at Llandudno, one of the two Wartski shops, located in Wales, were destroyed in a flood in the 1960s. This was the senior of the two shops, and the records for the most important pieces were kept there. I want to thank Kieran McCarthy of Wartski for this information. See Hillwood file 11.38.
- 39 See Russia's Treasure of Diamonds and Precious Stones (Moscow: Commissariat of Finance, 1925).
- 40 "Gems of the Khan of Khiva Sold," New York Times, July 17, 1927, sec. II, p. 2, col. 4. See also "Soviet to Sell Gems for American Plows," ibid., February 1, 1926, p. 1, col. 4. Rudolph Oblatt, an American jeweler, is described as a partner of Norman Weisz "in the recent purchase of a collection of royal jewels." Oblatt claimed he had spent five weeks in Moscow appraising the jewels, but it is possible he was only a partner if the jewels had been sold in the United States. See "Imperial Crown Still in Russia," New York Times, November 16, 1926, 4. In November, it was thought they were going to be auctioned on the American market. Ultimately that plan was scrapped because the United States did not recognize the Soviet Union.
- 41 Hans Nadelhoffer, Cartier: Jewellers Extraordinary (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1984), 287.
- 42 The Chicago dealer Harry Levinson actually purchased the crown, outbidding A La Vieille Russie, which was bidding for Post. At Post's request, Alexander Schaffer immediately negotiated a price with Levinson to buy it.

- 43 "Gems of the Khan of Khiva Sold," 2. In a report about a 1933 court case, it was noted that Weisz was born in Hungary and had been in business at Hatton Garden for thirty-five years as a jeweler and dealer in precious stones. Times (London), October 4, 1933, 4C.
- 44 "Russian Princess's Property: Sale by Soviet Challenged," Times (London), November 27, 1928, 27. See also Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia, A Princess in Exile (New York: Viking Press, 1932), 286-87. Grand Duchess Marie was a stepdaughter of Princess Palei. On the seizure of the Palei Palace furnishings, see M. A. Antifeeva and A. N. Chisikov, "Dvorets Palei: Muzei i ego kollektsii," Sud'by muzeinykh kollektsii, no. 6 (St. Petersburg: Tsarskoe Selo, 2000), 335-40. An initial offer for the contents of the Palei Palace was made by the consortium of Weisz, Jacques Helft, De Haan, and Frankel, but it was insufficient, Later, Weisz countered with a higher offer. See Gafifullin, "Kunst and Antiquitäten aus der Leningrader Schlossmuseen," 69. Helft was a Paris dealer who in his memoir claimed to have "secured from Trade Representatives of the USSR at Berlin a large consignment of French goldsmiths' work." This included the famous Orlov silver service, pieces of which are now in the Louvre and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. See Jacques Helft, Treasure Hunt: Memoirs of an Antique Dealer (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 28-29. Helft complained that "every time an agent was on the point of closing with an offer some other comrade would put in an appearance and insist on a higher price." Ibid.
- 45 According to various dealers, the Popoff firm in Paris bought porcelain and glass from the collection of Grand Duke Paul, probably at the time of this sale. See Hillwood curatorial files, "Popoff, glass purchase, correspondence." In 1998 Hillwood purchased a porcelain sugar bowl with a paper label on the bottom indicating that it came from the collection of Grand Duke Paul. Hillwood file 25.555.1–2.
- 46 Gafifullin, "Kunst und Antiquitäten aus den Leningrader Schlossmuseen," 75, and Nikolas Il'in and Nataliia Semenova, Prodannye sokrovishcha Rossii: Istoriia rasprodazhi natsional'nykh khudozhestvennykh sokrovishch, konfiskovannykh u tsarskoi familii (Moscow: Trilistnik, 2000), 108.
- 47 According to Kieran McCarthy at Wartski, the firm had many dealings with Weisz. See Hillwood file 11.38.

- 48 Tat'iana Muntian, curator at the Kremlin Armory Museum, furnished Hillwood with the history of the Catherine the Great Egg. See Hillwood file II.181.1-2.
- 49 Eleanor Barzin has repeatedly written that she gave this egg to her mother in 1931. She turned twenty-one in December 1930 and so would have received her inheritance by that time. Post may well have picked it out, but the 1936 date of purchase referenced in Robert Williams's book, Russian Art and American Money, is not correct. As to where Eleanor purchased the egg, one can only speculate that it was at L'Ermitage, where Hammer started to sell before approaching the department stores. Different addresses are given for Hammer's operations, but in 1931 the Wallace H. Day Galleries, L'Ermitage, and Hammer's office were all at the same address, 16 E. 60th Street.
- 50 Tatiana Fabergé, Lynette G. Proler, and Valentin Skurlov, The Fabergé Imperial Easter Eggs (London: Christie's, 1997), 118.
- 51 For more on Post as a collector of Fabergé, see Anne Odom, "Marjorie Merriweather Post: A Collector Discovers Imperial Russia," in Géza von Habsburg, Fabergé in America (London: Thames and Hudson, 1966), 171–77, and Anne Odom, Fabergé at Hillwood (Washington, D.C.: Hillwood Museum & Gardens, 1996).
- 52 Post also purchased two miniatures from the Iusupov collection in 1925. In fact, Cartier had already offered Post these miniatures in 1924. One of Anna of Austria, sister of Maria Theresa, is by Jean-Etienne Liotard and is mounted in a lavish diamond-studded frame. See Hillwood file 53.20. According to Nadelhoffer, Iusupov was hoping to sell his gold boxes to Elsie de Wolfe, the New York interior designer. See Nadelhoffer, Cartier, 132.
- 53 "The Log," Post Family Papers, box 38, 1 (1937).
- 54 See Kunstwerke aus den Beständen Leningrader Museen und Schlösser: Eremitage. Palais Michailoff. Gatschina. u.a. (Berlin, November 6, 1928), catalogue 2000, lots 197–198, p. 58, pl. 56. See Hillwood file, 21.191.1–2.
- 55 See Emmanuel Ducamp, Militsa Filipovna Korshunova, and Tatiana Borisovna, The Winter Palace, St. Petersburg (Paris: Alain de Gourcuff Editeur, 1994), 86–87.
- 56 Kunstwerke aus den Beständen Leningrader Museen und Schlösser, lot 83, p. 38, pl. 41. See Hillwood file 33.225, and Ilse Baer, "Table Top

- from the Berlin Manufactory (KPM) from the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," The International Ceramics Fair and Seminar Handbook 2001 (London: Park Lane Hotel, 2001), 14.
- 57 G. A. Popova, "'Podlezhat likvidatsii v dvukhnedel'nyi srok . . . ': Ob istoricheskikh komnatakh Anichkova dvortsa," in Sud'by muzeinykh kollektsii, no. 6 (St. Petersburg: Tsarskoe Selo, 2000), 330–31.
- 58 Both the porcelain-top table and the nesting tables have Anichkov Palace and Muzei Goroda inventory labels on them.
- 59 For Post as a collector of porcelain, see Anne Odom, Russian Imperial Porcelain at Hillwood (Washington, D.C.: Hillwood Museum & Gardens, 1999), and for glass, see Karen L. Kettering. Russian Glass at Hillwood (Washington, D.C.: Hillwood Museum & Gardens, 2001).
- 60 "Farfor peredannyi Gofmarshal'skoi chast'iu v 1910–1914 godakh," vol. 2. This manuscript inventory is in the European Division at the State Hermitage.
- 61 Elena Solomakha, "Verkäufe aus der Eremitage, 1926–1933," in Bayer, Verkaufte Kultur, 60 n. 12.
- 62 Academician Dmitrii Likhachev on a visit to Hillwood told the author that he remembered many pieces of the order services for sale in commission shops in the early 1930s.
- 63 Andrei Baranovskii, "Tsarskie veshchi brodiat po strane," *Russkii antikvar*', no. 1 (Moscow: Art Tema, 2001), 70.
- 64 Tatiana Tchernavin, Escape from the Soviets (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1934), 19.
- 65 "The Log," Post Family Papers, box 38 (1937).
- 66 For the assembling of the Walters' collection, see William R. Johnston, William and Henry Walters: The Reticent Collectors (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). I would like to thank William Johnston for so generously allowing me access to the collection.
- 67 For examples, see Anne Odom, Russian Enamels: From Kiev to Fabergé (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 1996), 36–63.
- 68 G. Prokhorenko and G. Vlasova, Muzei barona Shtiglitsa: Proshloe i nastoiashchee (St. Petersburg: Sezar, 1994), 34, 39, and 41.
- 69 Ross wrote, "Henry Walters was very fortunate in having Polovtsoff... select most of his

- Russian items. Many came from the original A La Vieille Russie on Faubourg St. Honoré in Paris, run by Zolonitsky and his nephew Léon Grinberg." Hillwood Archives, Papers of Marvin C. Ross.
- 70 The organizing committee praised Polovtsov. They were "fortunate in being able to draw upon [his] unrivalled connoisseurship and devoted enthusiasm . . . to him rather than to any other individual member, the Committee feel that the successful encompassing of our object is due." Catalogue of the Exhibition of Russian Art: 1 Belgrave Square (London: Oliver Burridge, 1935), 6–7. Polovtsov was obviously active in émigré art affairs. He also testified on behalf of Princess Palei in her suit against Norman Weisz in 1928. See "Palei Case," Times (London), November 27, 1928.
- 71 Odom, Russian Enamels, 30–33. See also William Johnston, "Henry Walters: America's First Collector of Russian Art," *Pinakoteke*, no. 22–23 (2006/1–2): 190–96.
- 72 Odom, Russian Enamels, 96-97.
- 73 Adrian Prakhov, ed., Al'bom istoricheskoi vystavki predmetov iskusstva ustroennoi v 1904 godu (St. Petersburg: T-vo P. Golike i A. Vilborg, 1907), p. 213 for the potpourri, and p. 141 for the bratina.
- 74 Two pieces from the Minshall collection are now at Hillwood. Post bought the previously mentioned set of nesting tables from the Anichkov Palace, and in 1988 Hillwood purchased a decanter from the service for the yacht *Derzhava*.
- 75 Henry Hawley, "India Early Minshall: Portrait Sketch of a Russophile," in von Habsburg, Fabergé in America, 93–99.
- 76 See David Park Curry, "Lillian Thomas Pratt: An Aesthetic Antiquarian," in von Habsburg, Fabergé in America, 117–27.

- 77 See John Webster Keefe, "Matilda Geddings Gray: A Louisiana Collector," in von Habsburg, Fabergé in America, 69–71. Gray's collection, willed to the Matilda Geddings Gray Foundation, was on extended loan to the New Orleans Museum of Art until 2006, when it was moved on extended loan at the Cheekwood Botannical Garden and Museum in Nashville, Tennessee.
- 78 See Hillwood file 12.155 for the rococo clock and 12.153 for the regimental clock.
- 79 For advertisements, see the Connoisseur issues of May, June, September, November, and December 1936.
- 80 I would like to thank Deborah Haynes, registrar at the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College, for providing me access to the Bartlett collection and to the papers stored there.
- 81 Tracey Albainy, former curator (now deceased) of European decorative art at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston generously gave me access to this collection.
- 82 Iu. A. Olsuf'ev, Opis' serebrianykh charok s ploskimi polkami i opis' serebrianykh bratinykh v Troitse-sergievoi lavry (Moscow: Komissiia po Okhrane Pamiatnikov Iskusstva i Stariny v Troitse-Sergievoi Lavry, 1925).
- 83 For more information about this collection and the objects in it, see Anne Odom, What Became of Peter's Dream: Court Culture in the Reign of Nicholas II (Middlebury, Vt.: Middlebury College Museum of Art, and Washington, D.C.: Hillwood Museum & Gardens, 2003).
- 84 Two pieces from the Christie collection are now at Hillwood.
- 85 See Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xvi, for comments about nostalgia following revolution.