Gustav Stickley

Image:



Gustav Stickley (1857-1942) is remembered as a leading member of the American Arts & Crafts movement, founder of the Craftsman furniture company, and elder brother of L., J.G., and Albert Stickley, siblings who first worked for him, then set up their own competing shops. Heavily influenced by William Morris, C.F.A. Vosey and the English Arts & Crafts movement, Gustav Stickley first produced his own designs from his studio in upstate New York, which he named United Crafts in 1901. These designs are simple in form, most often made of oak and featuring visible joinery such as dovetails and mortise-and-tenons, and finished in the “golden oak’ surface that became Stickley’s hallmark. The general style is also referred to as Mission due to a strong resemblance to the hand-crafted furniture of the California missions. His designs were eventually sold through catalogues under the Craftsman brand, whose product lines expanded to include metal and glassware as well as lighting and other home accessories, and eventually complete houses sold as kits. At its’ peak Craftsman was headquartered in a 12-story building that still stands on West 40 St in Manhattan. There Stickley published The Craftsman, a magazine devoted to popularizing all aspects of the Arts & Crafts movement, ranging from furniture to social, educational, and political practices as well as furniture and other craft-based designs. The magazine closed after financial burden of these and other ventures caused the Craftsman Company to declare bankruptcy in 1915. Although Stickley’s brothers and other manufacturers continued to produce furniture in the same style, the movement was essentially over by the close of WW1. The basic design principles continued to influence the work of designers and architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright, and In more recent years it has enjoyed a serious revival among a new generation of collectors, with record sale prices realized for fine pieces, most notably those designed by Harvey Ellis during his brief tenure at Craftsman. That name has become an umbrella term for both the philosophical and aesthetic principles of the American Art & Crafts movement as well as the furniture and decorative designs inspired by it.

Country of origin:

United States

Life Span:

1857-1942

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- Gustav Stickley

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