

# The Napier Co.:

*Defining 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Costume Jewelry*

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with

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**Of all the jewelry manufacturers in the United States, none has influenced a woman's expression of style more than The Napier Co. Throughout its 121-year history\*, it continually broke new ground, raising both standards and expectations for quality in fashion jewelry.**

It is only fitting that the Scottish name "Napier" means "without equal," as its dedication to innovation in manufacturing methods and the creative freedom of its designers, raised the bar for the American costume jewelry industry.

This book tells the heretofore untold and phenomenal story of The Napier Co.'s inception, development, flowering, and ultimate success. It chronicles the history of its management, manufacturing, marketing, and most importantly, the unparalleled beauty of its jewelry. With over 4,000 pictures and 250,000 words of text and descriptions, you will be taken step-by-step, decade by decade, through the development of the Napier style. As a collector, you will learn to recognize the findings, materials, and designs to appropriately circa-date the Napier jewelry in which you are investing. As a lover of jewelry, you will enjoy the drama and excitement of the trials, tribulations, and breakthroughs at each stage of the Napier journey. In the end, you will have a deep and lasting appreciation of the romantic story infused into the metal, gemstones, crystals, cabochons, and elegance of each piece of Napier jewelry that you own or are considering owning.

On this journey, we will examine Napier's role in the jewelry and fashion industries of which it was a part, especially the relationship between overall fashion trends and jewelry design. We will follow the development of the fashion industry as a whole, from the last quarter of the 19th century into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with a particular focus on the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when fashion or costume jewelry entered a woman's wardrobe as part of the necessary accoutrements of fashionable dress. As we guide you through the decades, you will learn how various social factors shaped the history of costume jewelry, including:

- The influence of the Paris Salons, couture, and the various fashion "movements" whose popularity and competition drove the ever-changing styles.
- The effects of technological and manufacturing breakthroughs, such as mass production, new materials and the affordability of jewelry on popular tastes.
- The communication breakthroughs in mass media, which both spread conventional fashion standards faster and more broadly, but also allowed for the creation of more specialized markets and styles.
- The impact of competition between jewelry manufacturing communities, firms and related industries, as well as the effects of governmental regulation and resource availability on what could be made, marketed, and sold as the latest fashion.
- And much, much more.



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