

Chick and Glitzy/ Two Toronto Jewelry Business Success Stories,

ca. 1940 to early 1970s

By Peter Kaellgren

This paper is based on a session that I presented with Joan Fussell at the Silver Society of Canada monthly meeting on November 20, 2019. Joan, who is a professionally-trained conservator and a collector of 20th century Canadian metal arts, worked together with me to create this program and prepared a second session for our January 15, 2020, meeting. Joan graciously assumed the bulk of the work in researching and assembling information on other important Toronto silversmiths who made jewellery. I want to thank Joan for her meticulous care in photographing material from my collection and the pieces generously loaned by Callie Stacey, who participates in the SSC when she is available. Gwen Adams, Technician in the Far Eastern Department of the Royal Ontario Museum, very kindly assisted me in preparing my Power Point Presentation and in assembling some of these images.

Joan Fussell and I decided to focus on Toronto because that is what we know, are able to collect, and can research. We believe that many local collectors are in a similar position. Often jewelry from the period c. 1930 -c.1970 is attractive, very well made and a number of pieces are Canadian. At the time, women wore all common forms being brooches, rings, necklaces, pendants, bracelets, and earrings. Earrings were usually screw-on and from about 1950, sometimes clip-ons, those for pierced ears only began to be popular towards 1970. That resulted in a range of smaller, often lighter, pierced earrings, which seldom came with matching brooches. A considerable quantity of this jewellery survives. It is often reasonably priced at flea markets, antique shows and antique malls. My interest in studying this jewellery arises from personal events in my life. I'll shortly explain that in greater detail.

It is interesting to consider the period c. 1930s to 1970s from the standpoint of the overall Canadian jewelry industry. On November 15, 1884, 157 Canadian jewelry manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers came together to form a professional organization known as the Jewellers Security Alliance of Canada with headquarters in Toronto.¹ Following World War I, on September 25, 1918, the Alliance re-organized as The Canadian National Jewellers Association. By the early 1950s, they boasted a high of 1,896 members and staged an annual wholesale show at the Canadian National Exhibition. It is little wonder that so much jewelry survives from this Mid-Century Modern period since a strong consumer appetite existed after World War II which resulted in many participants in the business. Today, according to an e-mail received from Valentina Cova who serves as Director of Membership and Education Services for the Canadian Jewellers Association, the name adopted in 2017, there are only 804 members.²

1. Information on the evolution of the Canadian Jewellers Association as it has been called since 2017 is taken from what is published on the internet. The CJA was not able to provide any information on the jewelers discussed in this paper. It does not maintain an archive and apparently has no interest in history.

2. E-mail from Valentina Cova, October 30, 2019.



The two jewelry producers I am documenting are Bond-Boyd Company Limited, founded in 1940, and Hedy Hill whose work has not been fully recognized. I discovered Bond-Boyd through a range of sterling silver orchid brooches and matching earrings that they manufactured during the period c. 1945 to possibly as late as 1970. (Fig. 1) My partner John Alexander photographs native Canadian orchids. John's company, Alexander Arts, offers his work for sale at annual orchid shows in Ontario. We soon discovered that there was a market for orchid collectibles at these shows. The vintage Bond-Boyd sterling silver orchid jewellery is an ideal product and represents the high quality of commercial work during the post-World War II period when orchid jewelry enjoyed great popularity.

My re-discovery of Hedy Hill is a more personal story. As a young child, I often accompanied my mother on shopping expeditions to large department stores like Eaton's. While she trolled the jewelry counters, I scoured the floor for loose stones. On one occasion, about 1952 or 53, while living in Toronto, I went with mother and Mrs. Lawrence M. Graburn³ to visit the showroom of Hedy Hill. I could not have been more than 6 ½ at the time but as a quiet, somewhat precocious child, it was considered safe to take me along. I was fascinated by Mrs. Hill who seemed very unusual. She showed us a range of hand-made, copper jewelry with a dull, smokey black finish. Mother purchased a pair of oval screw-on copper earrings mounted with green ceramic scarabs surrounded by a twisted wire border. The scarabs were described as being Egyptian which seemed terribly exotic in 1950s Toronto. I was obsessed by a small copper dinner bell with a green patinated finish at the centre of the table. It was shaped like a blossom dangling from a long stem and priced at \$15.00, a hefty sum, almost half the weekly wages for a semi-skilled worker in Toronto at the time. I remembered Hedy Hill but did not think of her until I recently discovered a large silver brooch with her printed label. But more about that later. (Fig. 2)

Bond-Boyd Company Limited

Bond-Boyd Company Limited is currently located at 52 Scarsdale Road, Toronto M3B 2R7. Today Janice Bond is the Vice-President. Mr. Richard Bond (the uncle of the current owner) and Mr. Carl Smith founded the company in 1940.⁴ *Might's Toronto City Directory for 1941* lists the company as “[Bond] Boyd Co. Ltd. Donald A. Hall [manager] [jewelers] (costume)/ 2nd flr, 251 Spadina av [telephone] WA[?] 3584”.⁵ Their premises were located in what is sometimes referred to as the “fashion district” of Toronto since there were many clothing manufacturers along Spadina Avenue. A “G. Fred [Boyd] sls mgr and dir Bond-Boyd & Co Ltd.” is listed as residing at “592 Huron”⁶ Street which would have been within walking distance of the main office and showroom. I was unable to document exactly what Bond Boyd was producing in the early 1940s. I am assuming that the bulk of their production would have been after World War II ended in 1945. Most of the jewelry that I have been discovering is all marked “BOND BOYD/ STERLING” in two lines on a tiny rectangle

3. Her husband Lawrence M. Graburn was employed as the director of advertising and publicity for Odeon Theatres. The Graburn family lived in a modern bungalow at 15 Carson Crescent, York Mills, an area that was re-developed when the 401 Highway was constructed. (See *Toronto: Might Directories Limited 1953, Names A -K, page 550*). My mother received free passes to the movies on Tuesday nights for the two of us. We usually went to the Odeon Theatre on Carlton, just east of Yonge, which featured a small table showcase on the landing for the balcony where some of the latest fashion items might be displayed. One time, this was Hedy Hill jewelry.

4. Information on the history of Bond-Boyd was generously provided to me by Janice Bond in an e-mail of November 13, 2019. This helped to put the pieces I had discovered into context.

5. *Might's Toronto City Directory 1941, Vol. 2, page 131.*





Fig. 1

Fig. 1 Orchid brooch and matching screw-on earrings. Die-pressed sterling silver, gold plated, mounted with fine cut Austrian glass crystals. Canadian, Bond-Boyd Company Limited, c. 1945—c.1965. Private Collection. Brooch L x W 6 x 6 cm

Fig. 2 Brooch, silver mounted with tumbled malachite pebble. Canadian, Hedy Hill, Toronto, possibly c. 1955-1970. Private Collection. Diameter 6.4 cm



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Fig. 3 Back of the orchid brooch in Figure 1 showing the applied rectangular plate stamped with the “BOND-BOYD/STERLING” mark. L x W of plate 6.2 x 2 mm

Fig. 4 Impressed “BOND BOYD STERLING” mark on the screw head of the earrings illustrated in Figure 12. Diameter 3 mm



Fig. 5 “STERLING BOND BOYD” mark impressed on the back of a leaf earring from Figure 14. Collection of Callie Stacey.

soldered onto the back of brooches and some earrings. (Fig. 3) This rectangle stamped with the mark seems to have stayed in use up to the 1960s as it appears on pieces that may be stylistically dated to that period. Screw-on earrings are usually marked in upper case letters “BOND BOYD STERLING” in a circle around the edge of the screw head. (Fig. 4) Occasionally a mark consisting of two lines with a large, upper case B and D at either end appears stamped in the centre of the screw head or on the back of earrings. (Fig. 5) This mark does not appear to have been used as often, perhaps because it could be difficult to read.

According to Janice Bond, jewelry manufacturing was the core business of Bond-Boyd from 1940 until the 1970s. They maintained an in-house sales force who marketed to jewelers across Canada and even in the UK for a time. Corporations, schools, businesses, and other organizations engaged Bond-Boyd to design custom badges and jewellery. Today, Bond-Boyd primarily manufactures corporate jewelry.

Two of the more notable in-house designers employed in the period 1950 to 1970 were Mr. Walter Wright and Mr. Bill Copping. The owner also travelled to Rhode Island, the centre for jewelry manufacturing in the USA, and brought back findings (component parts and samples) from designers there. These findings inspired new Bond-Boyd creations.

It appears likely that orchid brooches sold by Coro, one of the largest American jewellery manufacturers served as one inspiration for Bond-Boyd. During World War II, Coro negotiated a working arrangement with Hector Aguilar (1905-1986) who operated one of the more important jewellery ateliers in Taxco, Mexico, between 1939 and 1962. There were restrictions on certain metals needed for wartime use in the USA. Aguilar was able to produce and supply sterling silver jewelry at affordable prices which his firm did from about 1943 to about 1950. This jewellery, often bearing the impressed Coro mark, included a range of orchid brooches in many cases mounted with faceted glass stones. (Fig. 6)

After the War, when normal production and merchandising resumed, Coro developed a similar orchid brooch, efficiently produced from die-pressed steel component parts. (Fig. 7) These brooches are the ones most commonly found among surviving vintage jewellery and are likely the ones which inspired Bond-Boyd. They are not marked: when new, they came with a printed and embossed aluminum foil Coro label attached by a string. Examples that still retain these labels can be found on sites like EBay on the internet.

Coro produced these cattleya orchid brooches in a wide range of finishes, mostly painted lacquer as one sees on this example. A few are decorated in glossy enamel or even painted in oils to look like an actual orchid blossom. The two layers of petals and the tab at the end of the central trumpet are held together by a round rivet with round hole visible on the back. (Fig. 8) Screw-on earrings were made to match the brooches. In some cases, the pieces were enhanced with rods mounted to simulate stamens projecting from the trumpet. These were set with faceted glass rhinestones. The range of coloured rhinestones and the quality appears to be better than what is found on the Aguilar brooches.

In contrast, Bond-Boyd used superior quality imported glass stones. (Figure 9) Janice Bond classifies the stones as “mostly crystal from Austria (Swarovski),” and the company’s c.1950 promotional brochure describes them as “first quality Austrian Machine Cut Stones.”

The popularity of orchid corsages and orchid jewelry in the 1940s and 1950s suggests that as the period when Bond-Boyd began manufacturing this jewelry. Brides at wartime and post-war weddings often wore a





Fig. 6 Orchid brooch, sterling silver with gold plating and glass stones. Mexican, Hector Aguilar workshop, Taxco, Mexico, c. 1943-1950. Model produced for Coro, Providence, Rhode Island, USA. Image from Ebay.



Fig. 7 Suite of orchid jewellery including brooch and pair of screw-on earrings. Die-pressed steel alloy with painted lacquer patina. Unmarked. American, Coro, Providence, Rhode Island, c. 1947-c.1965. Private Collection.

Fig. 8 Back of a Coro orchid brooch showing the round rivet with the round hole. This holds together the three layers of die-pressed steel alloy. It is usually possible to rotate these component parts around this rivet. This can be helpful when the petals have been bent out of their correct anatomical alignment.



Fig. 9 Cattleya orchid brooch, sterling silver with gold plating, frosted areas created using metallurgy, and fine cut Austrian crystals. Canadian, Bond-Boyd, c. 1945-c.1965. Private collection.



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

Fig. 10 Back view of the Bond-Boyd brooch in Figure 9 showing the round rivet with the square hole. This holds all the component parts securely in place so that they cannot move.

Fig. 11 Fantasy bouquet brooch, sterling silver with gold plating and fine Austrian crystals. Canadian, Bond-Boyd, c. 1945-c.1965. The large flowers are created using the orchid trumpet component. Private Collection.

Fig. 12 Pair of orchid petal earrings, sterling silver with frosted finish and Austrian crystals. Canadian, Bond-Boyd, c. 1945-c.1965. Private Collection. L x W 3 x 2 cm

corsage. If the groom could afford one, orchids were the preferred flower. When Princess Elizabeth wed Philip Mountbatten in 1947, she carried a bouquet that was entirely composed of orchids. Orchids, especially cattleya corsages, were purchased by wealthy urbanites for a night on the town and commonly appeared in advertisements of the times.

Brooches and earrings with the Bond Boyd trademark are delicate and of excellent quality. Some have partially frosted finishes to the petals. These frosted finishes were created using metallurgical processes and not simple painted lacquer. Many are gold-plated. One of the distinguishing features, visible on the back of brooches, is a small round rivet with a square hole that holds the component parts securely together. (Fig. 10) Often the beautifully coloured and nicely faceted crystals are attached to a sterling band that projects out of or over the body of the brooch or sometimes inserted in place of petals. This creates a rich and eye-catching effect for wear after five pm.

The designers and craftsmen at Bond Boyd were extremely creative. Other compositions included petal sprays and orchid trumpets used to create an imaginative bouquet. (Fig. 11) In addition to orchid jewelry that was anatomically correct, they also produced a range of pieces based on the ruffled orchid petals or the trumpet in the centre of the blossom. (Fig. 12) These can be found in a range of sizes, some of them quite dainty and understated. Even at this small size, the craftsmanship and finish are top quality. (Figure 13)

Bond-Boyd silver jewellery inspired by the philodendron, a tropical vine that was a popular houseplant during the 1950s, turns up reasonably frequently. It is possible to find screw-on earrings, necklaces and bracelets. (Fig. 14) Such leaf designs like this are reminiscent of a contemporary oval leaf form that was created by a young designer named Willy Winnaess for Norwegian Ivar David-Andersen (1903-1998).





Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15

The Andersen firm produced Scandinavian modern jewelry which was fashionable in the mid-1900s. Andersen's silver jewelry is thicker: the silver has a very white appearance somewhat like frosted aluminum; and the centre of the leaves is often coloured with translucent enamel. Andersen's leaf jewellery was expensive then and still is. Like so much Canadian production of silver, especially that of Paul Petersen, the Bond Boyd leaf jewellery allowed Canadian women to enjoy Scandinavian design at a price they could afford.

Callie Stacey has a particular interest in this jewellery since she discovered the master forms for the leaf components among the work of her father Harold Stacey (1911-1979). (Fig.15) It is entirely plausible that Harold Stacey was commissioned by Bond Boyd to create a Canadian version of the vine leaf jewellery based on contemporary Scandinavian products which included similar leaf jewellery without enamels made by Danish silversmiths.⁷ Like so many silversmiths of his era, Stacey was knowledgeable about Scandinavian design and working traditions.

Callie Stacey also shared with me an advertisement from the period for Bond Boyd Jewellery in the *Globe & Mail*. (Fig. 16) The wording helps to put the

Fig. 13 Two Canadian, Bond-Boyd, sterling silver brooches: stylized orchid and large orchid trumpet brooch. The orchid trumpet brooch was also made in a smaller size and could come with tiny matching earrings. Private Collection.

Fig. 14 Matching leaf necklace, bracelet and screw-on earrings, sterling silver. Canadian, Bond-Boyd, Collection of Callie Stacey.

Fig. 15 Master forms for casting component parts for a leaf bracelet or necklace, sterling silver. Canadian, Harold Stacey, c. 1950, Collection of Callie Stacey.

7. At our November meeting, member Marian Fowler suggested that this leaf design jewelry may have been inspired by a line produced by Hobe, another jewelry manufacturer in Providence, R.I. I have searched the internet for comparable Hobe designs and found nothing to suggest this as the source. Hobe's main product was glittery jewellery with stones: few of its designs were balanced or classic. One of its early successes was supplying jewelry to Florenz Ziegfeld for his Broadway productions. I consulted with Callie Stacey on this. She was unable to locate any comparable Hobe jewelry and confirmed that at the time her father, Harold Stacey, would have produced these leaf designs, Scandinavian design was a strong influence on his work. A pair of sterling silver earrings of similar design to the Bond-Boyd ones that were marked by an unidentified Danish silversmith were sold by the Thrift Shop at Metropolitan Community Church Toronto a couple of years ago.



"To accent your own good taste..."

Sterling Silver jewellery designed to enhance
the beauty that is naturally yours . . .
complement your ensemble, and complete
the picture of fashion you present, when
you wear sterling jewellery by **BOND BOYD.**
at better jewellers

Fig.16



Fig. 17



Fig. 18



Fig. 19



Fig. 20

Fig. 16 Bond-Boyd advertisement for a rose necklace and matching earrings. Reproduced from *The Globe & Mail* (Nov. 23, 1955, page 16)

Fig. 17 Three Canadian Bond-Boyd Brooches, sterling silver with gold plating and frosted finish. 1960s. Collection of Callie Stacey. The ones at the ends are trillium blossoms.

Fig. 18 Stylized orchid brooch, sterling silver with gold plating. Canadian, Bond-Boyd, c. 1965-early 1970s. Private Collection.

Fig. 19 Screw-on petal earrings matching the brooch in Figure 18.

Fig. 20 Orchid brooch, sterling silver. Canadian, Bond-Boyd, c.1965-1975. This brooch model sometimes comes with a pearl mounted in the centre of the blossom.



Fig. 21

Fig. 21 Leaf brooch, sterling silver, gold plated, set with a small diamond. Canadian, Bond-Boyd, c. 1970. In original leather-covered box. Brooch L x W 5 x 1 cm

market that Bond Boyd was aiming to attract into context. The firm considered that their jewellery was created for women who appreciated good materials like sterling silver and elegant modern design at affordable prices. The rose motif jewelry in the advertisement reflects the popular taste of the 1950s and 1960s for something that is sweet, dainty and somewhat sentimental.

The Toronto Telephone Directory for 1957, Yellow Pages (page 366), has a two-line entry for Bond-Boyd: “BOND-BOYD & CO LTD 2433 Dufferin ORchrd 1145/ Showroom 48 Wellington E EM4 6361.” The change of address for the factory to an industrial area with lower rents and the new showroom in the heart of the city suggest that the company was successful and growing. Might’s 1960 Greater Toronto City Directory has a listing for “Bond-Boyd & Co Ltd, 2433 Dufferin (York Twp)” in the alphabetical category of businesses under “JEWELLERS/ (Wholesale and Manufacturing).”⁸ They do not appear under the “JEWELLERS/ (Retail)” category. This may suggest that they were beginning to transition to products that were ordered from outside the firm by clients who provided designs and specifications.

Dating Bond Boyd jewellery would seem to be largely a matter of visually assessing the style since limited dated catalogue or other information is currently available. (Fig. 17) More simplified designs like the trillium blossom likely date to the 1960s when publicity surrounding the centennial of Confederation created an appetite for national and provincial symbols. Brooches from the 1960s and 1970s usually follow simpler designs and are often smaller than the big showy orchid brooches. (Figs. 18, 19 and 20) Leaves and flowers are popular motifs. Today it is not always easy to find earrings that match these brooches. Some pieces are mounted with pearls and, in rare instances, diamonds. (Fig. 21) The workmanship and finish are always of fine quality but despite that and the silver content doesn’t stop the pieces from being tossed in with cheap costume jewellery when offered for sale today.

8. Might’s 1960 Greater Toronto City Directory. Toronto: Might Directories Limited, 1960, Vol. LXXXV, page 61.

Hedy Hill



Fig. 22

Fig. 22 Hedy Hill in her booth at the Gift Show, Toronto, September, 1958. (Star Photos by Federal Newsphotos) The photo appeared in an account of the show which was published in *The Toronto Star*. The journalist indicated that there was a wide range of merchandise at the show and business was expected to be brisk in anticipation of the Christmas season. It is interesting that Hedy was the vendor who was photographed considering the wide range of products available.

9. Interview recorded in "Egyptian Scarab Brings Good Luck," *World of Women*, *Calgary Herald*, July 15, 1959, page 31.

10. The most complete biographical information is included in Linda Curtis, "Hibernating Egyptian Beetle Inspires Jewellery," *Calgary Herald*, May 15, 1954, page 7.

Most of the information that I have discovered about Hedy Hill comes from articles, advertisements and announcements published in papers across Canada between 1954 and 1963. Hedy Hill was a great self-promoter whose European accent, which journalists usually described as "French," only enhanced her message and rendered her all the more fascinating. This was all happening in post-World War II Canada, a place where women were expected to be demure, stay home, keep house and raise children

and had only limited access to careers and influence in business or politics. (Fig. 22)

Pieced together from various newspaper interviews, Mrs. Hill was born in Austria and apparently attended art school there. She "first began designing jewelry as a hobby when she was a student at an art school in Vienna, Austria."⁹ In one interview, she breezily describes herself as being born in Austria, educated in France, married in Italy and raising her children in England. That was glamour few Canadian women could equal. She also stated that she went to design school in France with a view to a career in fashion but she failed to succeed because she was good at sewing but could not draw.¹⁰ Her husband was an aviation engineer. He was probably English, based on the surname and the fact that they were able to easily immigrate to England with their young son in the late 1930s when the Nazis were advancing through Europe. In England, Hedy worked in a daycare to be able to pay for a suitable placement for her young son. They lost all their possessions when their London flat was bombed in the Blitz. She went on to have a second son. In 1945, the British government sent her husband to work in Egypt and they moved to Cairo. Apparently he must have been very successful in his career because he travelled a lot and even came to Canada.

While in Egypt, Hedy began to collect odd antiquities and local crafts. On 26 January, 1952, an anti-British uprising known as “Black Saturday” erupted in Cairo. It was a reaction to British attempts to control the Suez Canal and the slaughter of fifty Egyptian law officers serving in the Canal Zone. Widespread rioting, looting and burning destroyed foreign businesses in Cairo. The Hills were then in Montreal and decided that it was safer to remain in Canada. Hedy lost her collection to the Cairo uprising but not her memories of watching a family of metal artisans working in a rural village fashioning jewellery by hand. Impressed by the safety, fresh air and countryside of Canada, the Hills settled in Toronto in 1952. But not before Hedy had acquired a large quantity of reproduction ceramic Egyptian scarabs that were salvaged from a burnt-out factory.

About 1952, Hedy used a pair of those scarabs to make earrings for a friend. I have not been able to document exactly what experience or training she had in metalwork but apparently the earrings were a great success. Hedy began to produce rings, brooches, etc. and started selling them door-to-door. My mother’s pair of Hedy Hill screw-on scarab earrings were beautifully finished. The green-glazed ceramic scarabs were mounted on small oval copper disks with a border of twisted copper wire. The copper had a mat, antiqued finish shading to black.

The reproduction scarabs were a wonderful marketing tool. The ancient Egyptians were fascinated by local beetles that spent the winter in the earth and then emerged in the warm spring sunlight and flew out. They believed that the great sun god Rah brought them back to life and considered them to be lucky and symbolic items to include in burials. Hedy often referred to her “lucky scarab jewelry”.

By 1954, Hedy was a news item. Having sons Peter, 16, and Jackie, aged 7, gave her credibility with homemakers and publicity value in the women’s section of newspapers.¹¹ In 1955, Hedy employed a staff of three in her workrooms and apparently produced mostly copper jewellery with an antiqued finish. (Fig. 23) According to one newspaper account, every piece was an original creation, though that may not have been true for the scarab jewelry. She was a great self-



Fig. 23 Brooch with pendant ring, copper with chemical patina and probably synthetic stones. Canadian, Hedy Hill Studio, Toronto, c. 1955-1965. As found on EBay



Fig. 24 Hedy Hill and her jewelry. Photograph from *The Calgary Herald*, (July 15, 1959, page 31) taken when Hedy was on a selling trip to Western Canada. Photography courtesy The Calgary Herald. Possibly on the same trip, Hedy picked up fragments of jasper from Jasper, Alberta. She brought these back to Toronto, tumbled them smooth and made jewellery to sell in the gift shops there.

11. Ottawa Citizen September 17, 1954, page 28, where there is a long write-up and a photograph of Hedy showing off a selection of her jewelry.



Fig. 24

Fig. 25 Hedy Hill's embossed and printed, foil-covered paper label as found on the back of the silver brooch, Fig. 2. L x W 2.3 x 1.7 cm. It was shaped somewhat like an artist's palette, a design form which was popular for occasional table tops and graphic design in the 1950s/1960s.

12. As noted in the *Calgary Herald* July 15, 1959, page 31.

13. For a photograph of Hedy and her display at the Show Mart Gift Exhibition in Montreal, see *Montreal Gazette* August 30, 1956, page 4.

14. Doyle Klyn, "Jewelry Is the Give-Away" in her *With My Gloves Off* column, *Ottawa Citizen*, September 29, 1959.

15. *Calgary Herald*, July 15, 1959, page 31.

16. *Might's 1960 Greater Toronto City Directory*. Toronto: *Might Directories Limited*, 1960, Vol. LXXXV, page 588, 4th column: "[Hill] Hedy Mrs. (Hedy Hill Studio) h. 286 Avenue rd / [Hill] Hedy Studio (Mrs Hedy Hill) handmade jwlry &/ unusual gifts 286 Avenue rd." Hedy's entries are longer and more detailed than most in the *Might's Directory*. This suggests that she was anxious to self-promote and make her products appear more exclusive. She did not pay to be listed in the *Jewellers* category on page 61 of the *Directory*, either in the "(Wholesale and Manufacturing)" or the "(Retail)" categories.

17. "Trade drive boosts sales to Europe," *Ottawa Citizen*, June 26, 1963, page 9. The write-up describes Mrs. Hedy Hill of Toronto as "The most charming member of the current mission" which consisted of 10 business people.

18. Doyle Klyn, "Jewelry is the Give-Away".

19. *Edmonton Journal* September 4, 1959, page

17. Advertisement for *Johnstone Walker Department Store*. Other products featured in the advertisement included women's autumn coats priced between 59.95 and 99.95, men's Banlon sweaters from \$10.95 to \$13.95 and the *Winkle Girdle* for \$3.95. Mrs. Hill's visit to Edmonton was publicized earlier in the July 22, 1959 *Edmonton Journal*.

advertiser, showing selections of her jewellery at the semi-annual National Gift Show held at the CNE, Toronto,¹² and appearing at the Show Mart Gift Exhibition in Montreal.¹³ Hedy went on the road, travelling to sell her wares, going to speak at women's clubs which were then enjoying popularity and giving interviews to newspapers, usually featured in the women's section. She often said that she could tell which part of Canada a woman came from by the jewelry the woman was wearing, and she encouraged Canadian women to be discriminating when buying jewelry and to choose something that is flattering.¹⁴ (Fig. 24) In 1959, she estimated that she introduced about 200 new designs every year.¹⁵ By 1960, she tells the newspaper that she has a staff of 9 and could hire more if there are rush orders. She lived at 286 Avenue Road which is also listed as the location of her business Hedy Hill Studio. The *Might's 1960 Greater Toronto City Directory* notes in the Studio entry that the product lines include handmade jewelry and unusual gifts.¹⁶ By 1963, her jewelry company was grossing about \$80,000.00 Canadian a year.¹⁷ That was good money and worth more than American dollars at the time. Hedy boasted that her jewelry was retailed in 1,000 different outlets across Canada even noting that it was about to be sold in Yellowknife in 1959.¹⁸ Retail prices ranged from \$3.50 to \$15.00.¹⁹

According to an article entitled "Toronto Jewelry Designer Plans European Exports" published in the *Ottawa Journal* (June 11, 1963, page 18), in March 1962, Hedy Hill was the only woman to register for the second export trade conference held in Ottawa. She subsequently "tested her samples on [the] Canadian trade commissioners and 'they thought I could find markets [overseas].'" This allowed her to "join an Ontario government sales mission which [left] for Europe on June 14 [1963]." Once again, she was the only woman in a team that included 9 men. Hedy planned to stop in London and "continue through such well-established jewelry centers as Vienna, Florence, Milan, Paris and Prague." That was a considerable achievement for any woman



Fig. 26

Fig. 26 Jewelry in the style of Hedy Hill Studio, all hand-worked copper with a chemical patina. Going clockwise: oval brooch with two glazed ceramic stones similar to the labelled example in Figure 23 (4.6 x 3 cm); leaf brooch with tumbled malachite pebble (L 6.4 cm); and pair of large clip-on earrings with simulated turquoise stones and twisted wire border (Diam. 2.7 cm). Although all are unlabelled, each has features that suggest an attribution to Hedy Hill Studio.

20. The interview in the *Calgary Herald* (July 15, 1959, page 31) provides more detailed information on the stones Hedy used. They included cat's eye, tiger's eye, goldstone and malachite from India along with amethyst and carnelian from Canada.

21. *Might's 1970 Metropolitan Toronto City Directory*. Toronto: Might Directories Limited, 1970, page 568, column 1, near the top: "[Hill] Mrs (Hedy Hill Studio) h 15 Walmsley blvd/ [Hill] Hedy Studio (Mrs Hedy Hill) handmade jwly & unusual gifts 286 Avenue rd (7)." (The "(7)" was probably the postal code.

22. *Might's Metropolitan Toronto City Directory 1975*. Toronto: Might Directories Limited, 1975, page 589, 4th column: "[Hill] Hedy h 7 Jackes Av apt 2606." At the time, a number of new and very attractive apartment buildings had been erected on Jackes Avenue. With its view of the city and close proximity to shopping, Jackes Avenue was a desirable residential address.

operating a business in Canada during the 1960s! We don't know how successful her promotional trip proved to be. At the time, other manufacturers like Renoir were producing similar copper jewellery with a mat antiqued finish.

Hedy's interview published in that same *Ottawa Journal* article records that "she uses semi-precious stones from Labrador, Niagara Falls, the Maritimes and Northern Ontario in her jewelry. She also makes synthetic stones from chemicals."²⁰ Tumbling semi-precious stones was a popular pastime in Canada in the

late 1950s and 1960s. This produced glossy, polished baroque pebbles that were considered ideal for contemporary jewelry such as you see in Fig. 2. Mrs. Hill goes on to list jewelry designs based on maple leaves and trilliums as well as "copies of baroque antique pieces and contemporary products in bronze and silver." She sums up by saying that "My jewelry is all Canadian, and I am proud to have Canada as my adopted country. It has been good to me."

Hedy Hill appears to have continued to design and produce jewelry and other original products up to the early 1970s. In *Might's 1970 Metropolitan Toronto City Directory*, there are entries for the Hedy Hill Studio at 286 Avenue Road and a home at 15 Walmsley Boulevard.²¹ *Might's Metropolitan Toronto City Directory 1975* lists Hedy Hill as living at 7 Jackes Avenue, apt. 2606.²² Because there is no listing for her studio, it is likely she had retired from the business.

Today, a considerable quantity of hand-crafted, Mid-Century Modern, copper jewelry can be found on the vintage Canadian market. It is difficult to identify exactly which pieces were made in the Hedy Hill Studio since her triangular printed silver foil labels were only stuck on and easily rip

or fall off. (Fig. 25) The graphic design of the printing is confusing. The “H” in “Hill” looks more like an “M.” This means that many of her labelled pieces are listed under Hedy Mill on sales sites on the internet. (Fig.23)

Sheet copper jewelry with tumbled stones or stones that look like glazed ceramic are likely to originate from her workshop. (Fig. 26) I am still looking for early examples of her lucky scarab jewelry. With the help of a friend, I was able to discover this necklace where the scarabs are likely to be stones created in her studio (Fig. 27) It was available on the US market. The vendor identified it as coming from a collection in Texas. A few pieces turn up in a white metal with a similar mat, antiqued finish. (Fig. 28) Only with a label is it possible to confirm which of these are from the Hedy Hill Studio. (Fig. 29) Most Hedy Hill/Mill jewelry is reasonably priced, well under \$50.00: the majority of the examples at under \$10.00.

I have discovered only one piece in silver, even though it was listed among the metals that she employed. I suspect that by using commercially available sheet copper, a material that was popular for crafts at the time, Hedy Hill could produce jewellery that was distinctive at prices that appealed to a popular audience. The silver examples may have been special orders as she certainly would have enjoyed the necessary connections for commissions through the lady’s social clubs where she lectured. A re-assessment of Hedy Hill jewellery is long overdue.

Dr. Peter Kaellgren served as curator in the European Department at the Royal Ontario Museum from 1972 until the end of 2009. He has lectured widely and taught courses on the history of European Ceramics and glass for the University of Toronto. His articles have appeared in scholarly journals and popular publications. Upon his retirement in 2009, he was granted Curator Emeritus by the Royal Ontario Museum. Since 2012, he and his partner, the photographer John Alexander, have become increasingly involved in searching for native orchids in Canada and in documenting them.



Fig. 27



Fig. 28



Fig. 29

Fig. 27 Scarab necklace, white metal with scarab forms, Hedy Hill label attached by a string. Canadian, Hedy Hill Studio, c. 1955-1970. Hedy may have created the scarabs in her Studio. Private Collection.

Fig. 28 Bracelet and matching clip-on earrings, white metal with chemical patina mounted with black stones (possibly tumbled obsidian pebbles from Mexico). Canadian, Hedy Hill Studio, c. 1955-1970. Reproduced from EBay.

Fig. 29 Hedy Hill Studio label on the back of one of the rosettes of the bracelet illustrated in Figure 28. Reproduced from EBay.