



ROSE PERCY



Rose took center stage as she presided over the festivities.



Duty's most faithful child is proud of her patriotism.



Patriotic children of the Civil War era played with toys such as this Little Drummer, a gift to Rose Percy from Mary Senko.



Only a ribbon of American flags could enhance this gorgeous velvet dress.

Several years ago, I heard that Miss Rose Percy, a special wax doll with an exciting backstory, was to be sold at auction. I wondered why the Red Cross would sell this special doll, but I knew that I could not afford her and thought that I probably would never have the opportunity to see her in person, especially if she were sold to a private collector. Sadly and reluctantly I put her out of my mind.

When I discovered that Rose Percy was coming out of her long retirement to help our present day war effort, I was thrilled, yet I envied those who would attend the premier Rose Percy event, which was to be held in San Jose, California, in May 2011. The very thought of seeing Rose Percy in person was tantalizing. Happily, though, I discovered that Rose was traveling to the Washington, D.C., area in early December 2011 to appear at a 150th birthday dinner in her honor, which was hosted by the Maryland Doll Club. I work in the Baltimore area as a portrait artist, so I knew I must go and see this doll I had so longed to meet.

I was not disappointed. The club and its chairperson, Barbara Stone, presented an outstanding event. No detail was overlooked. The Rose Percy event was held in Gaithersburg, Maryland, and coincided with the much-anticipated Christmas-time Gaithersburg Doll Show. Realizing that a raffle and auction items would be offered at the Percy event, my friends and I carefully kept back a little money so that we could place bids and drop tickets into the boxes positioned before the tempting treasures. A special Helper item, an R. John Wright Father Christmas, donated by Becky and Andy Ourant, raised a small fortune for Rose Percy's cause. The generosity of the many people who donated raffle and auction items was amazing and so appreciated.

At 6:30 p.m. we found ourselves in a patriotically decorated ballroom, where we stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to a flag proudly carried by a Boy Scout color guard. In the very center of the room stood Duty's Most Faithful Child, Miss Rose Percy, surrounded by her exquisite wardrobe and accoutrements, as well as by recently received gifts from an admiring public.

Among Rose's possessions can be found this tiny photograph of her president, Abraham Lincoln.



COMES TO GAITHERSBURG

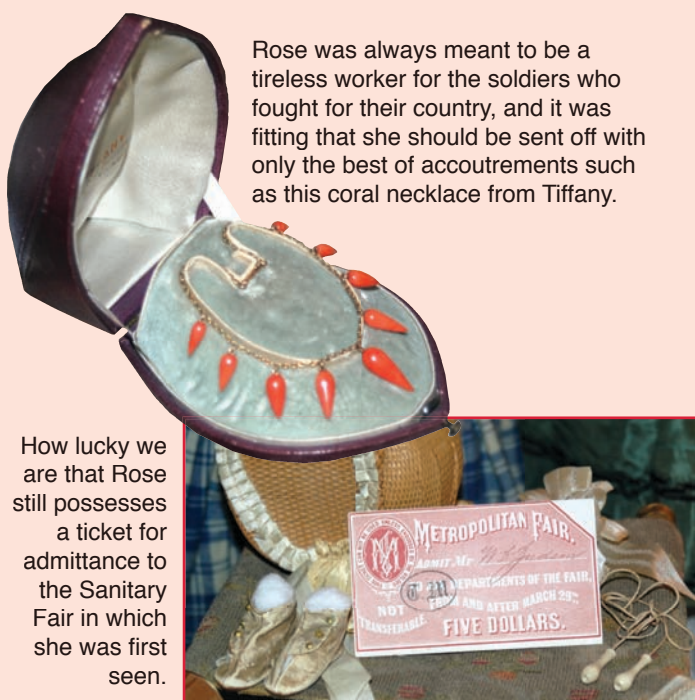


by Jennifer Kohn-Murtha
Photographs by Marcia Woolston

It was a never-to-be-forgotten moment. To see my doll-sized heroine, shimmering beautifully under the soft lights of the ballroom, was a memorable and meaningful experience for me. Her devoted audience sang “Happy Birthday” to her as the wait-staff at the Wyndham Garden Hotel Gaithersburg carried in a doll-sized cake made as a surprise in Rose’s honor. Perhaps the years have changed Miss Percy’s once youthful appearance, but how beautiful she looked that evening—her wax glowing, her blue eyes sparkling and that knowing smile. Perhaps she was remembering her journey from England to Mrs. Sarah Ogden Hoffman’s girls school where her unsurpassable wardrobe had been meticulously fashioned. Perhaps she was remembering her service during the Metropolitan Sanitary Fair in 1864. Perhaps she was reflecting on the visitors who came to see her when she was on display at the Red Cross Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Perhaps she was immersed in her happiness at being of service, once again, to her country. Or perhaps she was filled with pride as she overheard the compliments given to her and to the beautiful detailing of her wardrobe and to the sparkle of her tiny jewels.

Following the lovely formal dinner, Michael Canadas, one of Miss Percy’s guardians, presented a fine program on the Sanitary Fair Commission. He told of the Commission’s origins, which enabled us to understand even more the importance of the evening’s guest of honor, Miss Rose Percy. The live auction was conducted by Andy Ourant, who, assisted by his wife, Becky, worked the room with skill and charm. An impressive and sizable monetary amount was raised for Rose Percy’s charities, both local and military.

Rose was always meant to be a tireless worker for the soldiers who fought for their country, and it was fitting that she should be sent off with only the best of accoutrements such as this coral necklace from Tiffany.



How lucky we are that Rose still possesses a ticket for admittance to the Sanitary Fair in which she was first seen.



Portraitist Jennifer Kohn-Murtha painted this beautiful and true to life rendering of Rose Percy holding a little friend. She was also a Sanitary Fair doll and was donated to the UFDC Museum after the Rose Percy event in San Jose. The painting was donated by Jennifer to the Gaithersburg event, and auctioned off to a very lucky bidder.



This beautifully decorated table shows the lovely centerpiece and silver container donated by Margaret Kincaid, and the reproduction Tiffany stationery boxes that are exactly like the ones in Rose’s possession.

The evening drew to a close when our table hostesses presented us with a most beautiful book, *The Remarkable Rose Percy: Duty’s Most Faithful Child*, written by Michael Canadas and David Robinson. The book details Miss Percy’s life as well as her wardrobe and accessories.

“To the brave American fighting men and women, both past and present, who sacrificed, so that we all may live in freedom today.”

These words from the book’s preface are a fitting tribute to this very special doll, who in her own quiet way has fought for the freedoms we all deserve.

God Bless America, and God Bless Miss Rose Percy. Your support for our beloved country does not go unnoticed.

It is my sincere hope to see *you* at another Rose Percy luncheon or dinner. The experience is not to be missed.