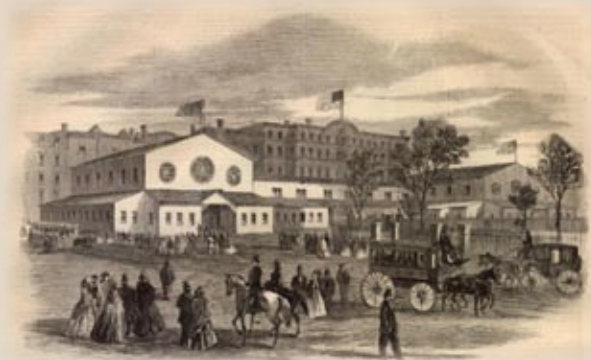


Rose Percy — Duty's

By Michael Canadas



This view illustrates the exterior of the building that was erected for the Sanitary Fair. This structure was one of the first commissions for the young American architect Richard Morris Hunt. He would go on to design some of New York's finest buildings and grandest homes, but the fair is where it all began for him.



The first charity stamp in history was produced for the Metropolitan Fair in New York. This example is part of Rose Percy's personal collection of fair memorabilia.



Whether from a high social standing or low, all New Yorkers went to the Metropolitan Fair. Daily admission was one dollar, with Thursdays offering a special price of 50¢. Admission and sales throughout the fair's six-week run earned \$1.1 million. For a city whose inhabitants numbered just over 100,000, the gross amounted to a feat that might be difficult to duplicate today.

Many years ago I had the good fortune of making the acquaintance of a very special doll. The introduction was most memorable perhaps because of those who provided it – doll legends Dorothy Coleman and Evelyn Jane Coleman. The ladies' enthusiasm for Miss Rose Percy was immediately evident, and even a young, green collector (like I was at the time) could recognize that what he was seeing that day was greatness. I have never forgotten that first moment spent with Rose, and even now, more than twenty years later, I often think of the kindness extended by the Colemans. What's more, the two were always willing to share their vast knowledge of dolls, even with brand new collectors. I will always treasure that day and the memory it provided. I consider the Colemans the role models for not only the kind treatment of, but also the encouragement of new collectors, and to this very day, I strive to emulate their brand of engaging behavior.

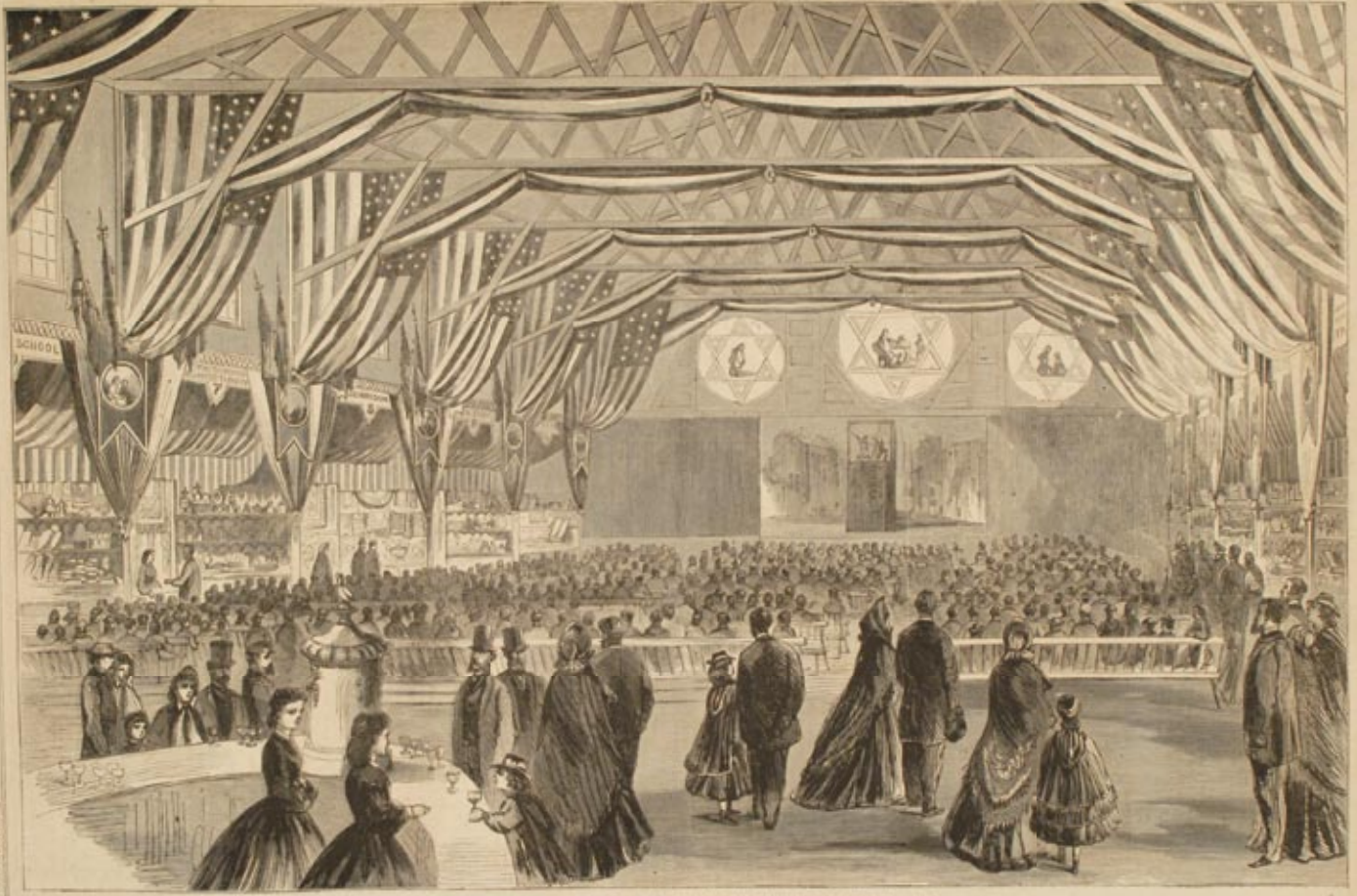
Now, please fast forward to a wonderful article written by Elizabeth Ann Coleman that appeared fairly recently in *Antique Doll Collector* magazine. The piece featured my old acquaintance, "the remarkable Rose," Miss Rose Percy. What a nostalgia-inducing experience it was, to see and read about Rose again. During my first meeting with her, I was more interested in Rose, the doll, her sublime clothing, and all of her accessories, rather than her historic life. After all, one could understandably be distracted by jewels created by Tiffany & Company, by sumptuous furs made by C. G. Gunther, and by an original wardrobe that is second to none. Maybe it is a sign of maturity, but I must admit that her story intrigued me the most in that second exposure to Rose, the one provided by yet another member of the Coleman family.

Forgive me, but I am assuming that you already know who Rose Percy is, aren't I? How did Miss Rose Percy come into being you ask? Well, a group of young ladies who attended one of the finest finishing schools in New York City decided that they wanted to do their part for those suffering from involvement in the Civil War. By contributing something tangible for the benefit of the upcoming Metropolitan Sanitary

Most Faithful Child



Rose's inventory of clothing includes mostly party dresses, and truly not many that are suitable for play. This wonderful white lawn dress is smashing with its tartan plaid ribbons. What is most wonderful about it is the extra lengths of ribbon that were included to decorate Rose's hats or her hair. Sarah Ogden Hoffman's girls thought of everything for their dear Rose Percy.



THE METROPOLITAN FAIR—THE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT, UNION SQUARE.—[See Page 265.]

The children's department as shown in Harper's Weekly. In the foreground is the refreshment stand run by the loveliest girls in New York City. In the center back can be seen a puppet show in progress, and to the right of that is the skating rink. What a wonder that must have been, to skate upon an indoor rink in April! At the far left was the magical children's department, where Rose Percy surely reigned supreme.

Fair, they could participate in a positive manner. No doubt many of the girls' mothers were involved in the planning of the fair, and because each of those involved probably had a brother, father or family member in the service, they had a vested interest in its success. Money raised by the Sanitary Commission (the forerunner of the American Red Cross) might just pay for the medical attention for one of their beloved. A very telling aside to substantiate that idea is the fact that the fair's toy department's slogan proclaimed simply: "Buy a toy, save a life."

Under the directorship of a well-connected member of one of New York's founding families and also the owner of the boarding school, Mrs. Sara Ogden Hoffman, a doll was acquired with the idea that her students could sew a trousseau for it, thereby giving the girls a chance not only to hone their needlework skills, but also to create a charitable product for the fair at the same time. The doll that the girls of the school chose was Rose.

At the Metropolitan Sanitary Fair of 1864, staged and held in New York City by the United States



Shown here is a season pass for the Metropolitan Sanitary Fair. A very special artifact that has survived from the Civil War era, few of these are known. The five dollar admission was quite a lot of money at the time. It is possible that the admission price itself might have been all the gentleman ticket holder could have afforded to give to the cause.



Appearing as if she stepped right out of a Currier and Ives print, Rose possesses the only complete 1860s skating costume of which I am aware. Every piece is intact, from her specially made boots which accommodate her blades, to the wool drawstring sack that houses them, plus the fur ensemble that was made for her by New York's finest furrier, C. G. Gunther. In a word, sensational!



Bonnets are plentiful in Rose's trousseau. This Mary Stuart bonnet with its net carriage cover is one of her favorites.

This view of the fair was recorded by Harpers Weekly as seen from the book department showing lovely ladies working the sales tables. The department was run by Mrs. Sarah Ogden Hoffman, the same fine lady who operated the finishing school whose students created Rose Percy's wonderful wardrobe of over one hundred pieces. The book department was heralded a complete success due to the hard work of Mrs. Ogden Hoffman, a lady of the highest social standing. Her experience and excellent judgment, garnered from managing her school, aided her greatly I would imagine.



Rose is a definite party girl, and this pink party dress is a masterpiece of design with its pink silk and pink plush trim, plus delicate blonde lace. The materials utilized in Rose's trousseau were generously supplied to the schoolgirls by one of New York's finest dry goods establishments at the time, Arnold, Constable and Co., whose client list included Mary Todd Lincoln. Rose can be seen wearing this dress in some of her earliest photographs, those that date circa 1919.

Sanitary Commission, Rose Percy, a petite waxen treasure of American history, raised at the very least \$1,200! To help put that figure into perspective in today's dollars, at that time, an upper middle class home could have been bought for \$600, or one could have treated 1,200 of their closest friends at any of the finest dining establishments in New York or San Francisco, and had plenty of funds left over for a tip. As another example of what a dollar was worth in the 1860s, the United States government gave First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln \$20,000 to renovate the dilapidated White House. Mrs. Lincoln promptly went over budget by \$5,000, which caused her husband, the president, a very big problem, as he personally didn't have the money to cover such a sum. In the end, Congress quietly paid the bill for the overage.

Finally, to put the 1864 dollar into a comparison that we can all understand, do you realize that a precious French doll with a magnificent wardrobe would have cost a sanitary fair attendee a whopping forty dollars? So in Rose's time, the sum of \$1,200 paid for a doll of any sort made her quite a stand out.

Today, for anyone seeing Rose in her entirety, it should be obvious that the main ingredient in her creation, besides skill, is complete devotion. At the long-awaited fair, the school girls' devotion paid off when the elegant Mrs. John Jacob Astor first bought Rose for cash and then generously donated her back to be raffled to the fair's attendees. In a very kind act, the lucky winner of Rose donated her back to the girls of the finishing school. The girls then gave Rose to their school doctor, Dr. Peters, who in turn gifted Rose to his little daughter, Bertha. Happily, Rose lived with and was treasured by Bertha for over sixty years. Whenever a good cause arose and Rose could be put to service, she was dispatched to do good and raise funds, but please understand that Rose was always accompanied on her travels by a chaperone. From Bertha's early childhood days until her old age, if she or Rose were asked for their assistance toward a worthwhile cause, they provided the public quite a grand show.





Tiffany & Co. created Rose's calling cards and the monogrammed case that secures them. Not only that, Tiffany also gave her the original engraving plate! So if Rose comes calling, expect her to leave one of her cards, as she can always have more printed.



Feast your eyes on rare pieces of doll history in the form of a box of monogrammed stationery and envelopes from Tiffany & Co. The box is full, and seemingly the contents were never used during the last one hundred fifty years.



Rose's ivory photo book from Tiffany & Co. features her monogram. It was displayed near her at the fair in 1864 and has never been far from her since.

In contemplating her sixty-year career during Bertha's lifetime, it is difficult to ascertain how much money Rose actually raised in that long time period, but we do know that Bertha, her caretaker and "promoter" was a very active fundraiser. Even during World War I Rose was raising funds for much needed medical ambulances and other necessities that casualties of war could use. In those days the price of admission for a peek at Rose and her bountiful possessions was 25¢.

In 1919, at the end of the Great War, Rose Percy was loaned for exhibition purposes to the American Red Cross Museum in Washington, D.C. A year later, she was permanently gifted to the Red Cross, and for the next eighty years she acted as the mascot for the Junior Red Cross. Rose fulfilled her duty with quiet dignity and grace, greeting and meeting visitors from all over the world. All were privy to hear her remarkable life story, and all the while it was related to those visitors, Rose silently stood, or sat, and posed, year after year. We know that in the early years of her residency at the museum, the Red Cross volunteers would change Rose's clothing seasonally, but as the years went by, the clothing changes occurred less often.

In 2005, the Gulf States, America, and the Red Cross itself were hit hard by hurricane Katrina. Due to the monumental effort of dealing with the hurricane's aftermath, the finances of the Red Cross were strained, and plans for a new museum home for Rose, which had been in the works, were abandoned. The economic reality for the Red Cross in those days after Katrina amounted to a \$203 million shortfall. Facing that kind of debt, the organization decided to divest itself of some of its own museum's treasures.

Opposite: Green was such a popular color in the early 1860s. This lovely dress is perfect for wear at night, or during the day, and even has built-in pockets that can be accessed in the folds of the skirt. The fan on the chair works nicely with it, as does her handbag. The petite wax doll Rose holds in her hand represents a recent gift. After all, an old girl can always use a new doll!



A HOLIDAY TO-DAY

It is desired that to-day be made a General Holiday. All the public offices, banks, & c., will be closed, and business will doubtless be generally suspended. The following is the mayor's PROCLAMATION.

I deem it a duty to call the attention of my fellow-citizens to the fact that, during the continuance of the unhappy strife in which our once peaceful States are involved, there has arisen a host of Good Samaritans, whose sole care is "to allay the pain and draw out the irritation" of the unfortunate participants therein.

The Sanitary Fairs throughout the country are to culminate in the gigantic enterprise of the benevolent ladies of this Metropolis which is to be inaugurated on Monday next, with appropriate military and civic ceremonies. In view of the importance of the occasion, and the praiseworthy associations connected with this labor of love, I recommend to my fellow-citizens to observe the 4th day of April, inst., as a holiday, and that all business, excepts works of charity and necessity, be suspended.

Dated New-York, 2nd April, 1864

C. GODFREY GUNTHER, Mayor.

The mayor of New York City proclaimed the opening day of the Metropolitan Sanitary Fair, a general holiday. Note the mayor's name – C. G. Gunther. Yes, a member of the renowned family of New York furriers – the very one who created Rose's ermine coat and hat!

Opposite: Perhaps the image of this doll wearing this dress looks familiar to you? If so, you probably have a copy of the Coleman's Book of Doll Clothing in your library. In the book, Rose can be found in photographs that date from the 1920s. The dress is a triumph of 1860s design and construction. Due to the vast amount of ribbon and trim utilized, it would be quite difficult to recreate this party dress today.

Last year, while quickly paging through a newly delivered issue of *Antique Doll Collector*, Rose caught my eye yet again when she appeared in a two-page advertising spread. By way of not actually reading the text and simply making an assumption, I thought, that as in the past, Rose was working to raise money for the Red Cross through some charitable event. I was quite mistaken. Two weeks later, I received a telephone call from UFDC Vice-President Ada Diedrich. Ada told me that she was working with Ann Coleman and others to find a way for the UFDC to purchase Rose. She asked whether I had some suggestions about how to raise funds for the effort, as well as if my partner, David, and I would be willing to give a donation. Frankly, I was in shock to learn that an American treasure such as Rose Percy was headed to the auction block, but of course I pledged our help. A few days later, another call came in from a dejected-sounding Ada with a report that several influential UFDC members had been approached, but that the Rose Percy project was not finding the needed support. Ada admitted that the UFDC could not entertain the expense of Rose for its museum and went on to inquire if I could personally buy Rose and, at a later date, help work out a way for her to become part of the UFDC museum collection. Sadly, I had to admit to the UFDC vice-president that it just wasn't a good time for us. We were just about to sign the papers to purchase a historic building to house our antique doll business, so all of our available funds would be needed for the remodel of our new shop. But, I did say to Ada, "Let me see what we can do." With a queasy feeling in the pit of my stomach, I put the phone down and thought of the worst-case scenario. Could the most important doll in America, who is complete with a provenance that connects her directly to Abraham Lincoln's White House, possibly be leaving our shores? Yes, a foreign buyer might love her, too, but might they really have any idea what she had achieved for our country? Would it matter to them that Rose Percy was one of the first individuals to hear the song "When Johnny Comes Marching Home"? Would they understand that Rose is a firsthand witness to American history, or what if she were bought and sold again, piece by piece? That terrible fate has befallen some magnificent original dolls with trousseaux at the hands of auctioneers and dealers. I felt sick. I sat stunned, but not too stunned that I could not pick up the phone and call a friend, a lady of means, and one who is not unlike Rose's first benefactress. I needed to appeal to a proud defender of all things American. Once I had her on the line, I explained the situation and described what I had determined might be the worst possible outcome for Rose. I really don't consider myself much of a salesman, but I gave it all I had that day. There was quiet at the receiving end of the pitch, until I brought up the deal maker:





I admitted that I was sure that some very fine doll museums in Europe would love to house our Rose. The response on the other end of the line was, “Buy her, and just use your own discretion.” I did throw out some dollar figures in an attempt to test the waters, which are quite deep, but I knew that because Rose is, after all, in a class by herself, anything could happen.

The next telephone call I placed was to the firm in charge of the Red Cross sale, the Heritage Auction Company, and I made a reservation for a line to telephone bid for Rose. I did not mention a word to anyone else about the plan, because if it didn’t succeed, I hoped to keep any disappointment to a minimum.

In the days leading up to the auction, we received many emails and telephone calls from concerned collectors who were worried about Rose’s fate. We chose not to respond to them, as we didn’t want to jinx the carefully crafted plan. So yes, if you were wondering, we can keep a secret. At ten o’clock on the morning of the sale, the auction house rang with a test call and informed us that Rose Percy would be selling at one o’clock that afternoon. They instructed that they would call back just before the lot was announced, and added that there were four lines in place. That afternoon at a quarter past one, the call came in. Yes, I could tell that there were indeed phone bidders from all over the world on the other lines, but I would describe the pace of the sale as “you snooze, you lose,” and the bidding lasted less than twenty-five seconds. In my experience, most doll auctions seem to last forever and a day. Perhaps the other phone bidders were not accustomed to such a fast pace, or were simply too slow in their decision-making, but the outcome was that Rose was hammered down to me.

After the sale, the first telephone call I placed was to Rose’s kind, generous, and anonymous benefactress, thanking her for doing her part for Rose’s future, and for America. The next call was to Elizabeth Ann Coleman, and finally, I spoke to our own Ada Diedrich, and informed each of them of the happy turn of events, to which they both reacted with heartwarming relief and gratitude. I am keenly aware, however, that actions lead to responsibility. The Red Cross auction took place in November, and because I did not want Rose to be handled or shipped by strangers, poor Rose remained in storage at the auction house in Dallas by herself until we could get away and make the trip to personally retrieve her. The “Rose-mobile,” as it is now known, departed California for Texas the following January.

The Heritage Auctions facility was quite impressive on its own, mostly due to the major security system to which a visitor is subjected, but I really wasn’t prepared for the multi-shelved industrial cart that wheeled Rose to us while we waited in the security-camera-fitted, climate-controlled receiving room. She was safely housed in a Coleman cooler, and her 27 gray archival boxes of clothing and accessories were carefully stacked around her. Of course, right then and there, we just had to check each box against the known inventory sheet. We were delighted to view the finest wardrobe of enfantine-style clothing ever made by American hands. Some of the pieces I recognized some of the pieces we unwrapped from old newspaper articles and photographic coverage of various exhibitions, but I believe some of the items in the boxes had never been shown to the public, possibly since Rose debuted at the Metropolitan Sanitary Fair in 1864. We unwrapped fine accessories that appear today just as they did the day they were made. Among them was Rose’s boxed Tiffany & Co.

Without a doubt, Rose is the luckiest doll in the world. I am aware of no other doll that has Tiffany & Co. jewelry that was made just for them. Further, the necklace of gold and droplets of coral arrived in a monogrammed box! In the nineteenth century it was believed that coral possessed protective qualities for children. Well, it seems to have done the trick, for Rose is still with us. By the way, this doll-sized necklace represents one piece of a handful of Tiffany jewelry from this early era of the company’s history that has survived with its original box.

Opposite: A silk faille jumper with black velvet trim is perfect for daytime, and its condition is like the day it was made.

Here Rose poses with her most beloved president, Abraham Lincoln. She has had the great fortune to meet many presidents, their first ladies, and their children over the last 150 years, but it is President Lincoln, both his spirit and his words, that Rose keeps closest to her heart.



necklace, which is an amazing sight. Then there is Rose herself, who is charming, rather pretty, likeable, and yes, approachable.

David was the first to unwrap Rose, and I am sure her wise blue eyes instantly recognized his, as he is related to Rose's first benefactress dating back many, many lifetimes ago. David handed Rose to me, and as I put her back in her Coleman cooler for the long journey home, he instructed me in the proper way of handling Miss Rose Percy, as she only has eyes for him it seems.

As she made her way west, Rose was a complete trooper—no trouble did she cause. I should not be surprised by that fact, let us not forget that not only traveling, but also being packed and unpacked again and again, was all a large part of Rose's first sixty years.

When we originally negotiated with Rose's most recent benefactress, it was discussed that Rose could go back into the charitable fundraising business, as she has a proven record of doing just that. With 2011 being not only the 150-year anniversary of the Civil War, but also Rose's 150th birthday, what better time might there be for Miss Rose Percy to make her return debut?

Complete with over one hundred surviving pieces of clothing created for her, Rose requires a lot of acid free boxes and tissue to house it all. An insulated cooler works perfectly for transporting her. The eight small boxes contain her hats and shoes, while the larger boxes contain her articles of clothing. This photo illustrates how Rose and her things were stored at the American Red Cross Museum.



I am pleased and excited to announce that with the assistance and dedication of my very own UFDC doll club, the Carmel Doll and Toy Study Group, Rose Percy will be the guest of honor at a coming out birthday party and luncheon in the spring, slated to be held at the lovely Hayes Mansion in Santa Clara, California, on Saturday, May 14, 2011. At this event, and only at similar events, not only will guests be able to view at their leisure Rose and her trousseau in its entirety, they will also receive a book about Rose's remarkable possessions and the details of her long history. The event will be tailored along the lines of an actual nineteenth-century sanitary fair, with guests having a chance to purchase various products, and there will be an assortment of helper prizes that will all be part of her fundraising mission. Rose will be raising funds for numerous causes, first being veterans of all wars, with an emphasis on those with brain injuries and mental health issues, conditions that affect not only soldiers, but their families as well. We are very happy that the new plans are very close to her original mission, the one that was dictated by the girls of Mrs. Ogden Hoffman's school so many years ago. At least fifty percent of all of Rose's earnings will be earmarked for that fund, and it will be distributed to those in need directly, without administrative costs. In addition, a variety of local causes are near and dear to Rose's heart, and she will also give a portion of her earnings to them. Because UFDC members have exhibited a vested interest in Rose, a portion of any of her earnings will go to the UFDC museum fund. Perhaps with some assistance, in the future if a significant doll treasure comes on the market, the UFDC can be in a better position to acquire such an item for the UFDC museum. A stipend must be retained for Miss Rose's transportation expenses and her Lloyds of London insurance policy, but she will not keep one penny more than she needs. No doubt, Rose Percy is the wealthiest doll in America in material goods, but it is her history that makes her peerless. Hers is a history that is really just beginning to reveal itself, with some serious investigating that is. Rose is no pushover, she still holds on tight to the same four half-dimes that the young ladies of Mrs. Ogden Hoffman's school tucked in her purse in order to help her begin her life's journey. The UFDC clubs that will be working with Rose will be required to show a dedication similar to that exhibited long ago by the girls of Mrs. Ogden Hoffman's school, during a most difficult time in our great nation's history.

Similar charitable events are being discussed for New York, Washington, D.C., and North Carolina. The trip south might be a first for our Yankee girl Rose. Interestingly, just before her death, Rose's former owner, Bertha Peters, made it clear that she did not want Rose to ever be part of a fundraising mission in the South. Maybe Bertha embraced that point of view after having lived through the Civil War herself, and just maybe she was afraid for Rose's safety. But Bertha probably had no idea of the kind of all-American icon that Rose would become through her work with the American Red Cross, and that she would go on to be the honored guest of President Ronald Reagan and Mrs. Nancy Reagan at the presidential library that bears his name. Also on one occasion, Rose would charm President Gerald Ford and Mrs. Betty Ford.



This dress caused a sensation in the 1920s. It was mentioned in both the New York Times' and Washington Post's world news accounts of Rose's moving into the Red Cross Museum in Washington, D.C. It was as if the jazz babies had never seen a silk plaid dress before! Rose dons the special dress to decorate her very own Christmas tree.

Like most of Rose's things that feature either a monogram or her name on the object, this set of books bears the name "Rose Percy" spelled out in what is most likely Mrs. Ogden Hofmann's own handwriting.





The girls at Mrs. Ogden Hoffman's school could have chosen any doll they desired for their project – one of bisque, china, or papier-mâché. It is interesting that they chose a wax doll, which was actually among the most expensive and luxurious of their time. Rose was meant to be a child and Sarah Ogden Hoffman knew that a chubby child like Rose would have stood a chance at survival – she was right.

It appears that Rose is saving for a rainy day, as the four half-dimes that the girls of Mrs. Ogden Hoffman's school put in her handbag to help Rose begin her journey are still with her. If Rose had put them in the bank in 1864, with compounded interest, she would have \$10,250.00 today. One can sense the sacrifice that the little girls made when they gave up the precious coins, by just squeezing them in your hand. No monetary value can be put on that feeling.

Let us not forget that our little Yankee doll Rose would always follow the advice of her first and most beloved president, Abraham Lincoln: The “war is now closed and soon we will live in peace with the brave men who have been fighting against us.” Let us remember that it was the fighting men of the South, as well as those from the North, who received the medical benefits provided by funds raised in part by Miss Rose Percy.

We strive to make Rose Percy's first event the summit of elegance, one reflecting both who Rose is and where she came from. Some subsequent events may be more simple and charming in design, but they, too, will be a reflection of who she is. Foremost, Rose's events will be required to be a celebration of America, held in the spirit of unselfish volunteerism.

Recently someone told me that Americans don't care about their own history, we all move forward not giving our past a thought. There may be some truth to that, but we can learn so much from our history. Miss Rose Percy is re-living history and moving forward at the same time – a compromise.

In 1864, it was said that Rose was the representation of all of the world's treasures at that Metropolitan Fair. In her lifetime she has met hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world. In 1920, the Washington Post stated that Rose was the most important doll in America, and today I believe it is still so. To meet her and learn her story is to fall under her spell, the same way that those school girls did so many years ago. They would be happy to know that Rose is back doing what she does best, and should Lady Liberty or Miss Unity call on Rose, she will be there. For she was, is, and will always be the remarkable Rose Percy, duty's most faithful child.



Rose has very few play dresses. Here, she wears one that is suitable for winter wear, while she dresses a paper doll – “La Petite Coquette.” The boxed paper doll set belongs to the UFDC museum. It was purchased at the 2010 UFDC convention in Chicago, and then loaned to *DOLL NEWS* for this photo opportunity. The paper doll will be on display in Kansas City shortly. Please visit dollnews.org to print out your own copy of “La Petite Coquette.”





“La Petite Coquette” is shown here at its actual size. Dating circa 1865, the boxed set is nearly complete, and includes a very rare mourning costume.

LA PETITE COQUETTE.

Désignation de chaque Toilette.

1. Robe de Chambre.	13. Toilette de sortie de Bal.
2. Peignoir du matin.	14. id. de promenade.
3. Toilette de Ville.	15. id. de Deuil (Ville.)
4. id. de Campagne.	16. id. de Deuil (Intérieur.)
5. id. de promenade.	17. id. de Ville.
6. id. de Visite.	18. id. d'Amusane.
7. id. pour l'Eglise.	19. id. de Bal Champêtre.
8. id. de Mariée.	20. Travestissement (Marquise.)
9. id. de Soirée.	21. id. id. (Sultane.)
10. id. d'Opéra.	22. id. id. de Visite.
11. id. de soche d'Opéra.	23. id. id. de Cérémonie.
12. id. de Bal.	24. id. id. de Nuit.

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