



**Smithsonian Institution**

*Archives of American Art*

## **Celebrating 175: Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, Biographical Sketches (WMAA file), 1917-1947**

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"Washington Heights and Inwood Memorial": "Wherefore", seated figure seemingly crushed by life's burdens, bought by Art Institute of Chicago; memorial to H.B. Duryea; bronze plaque of Walter Damrosch.

On July 4th, 1924, was erected in the town of Cody the memorial statue of Buffalo Bill (Colonel William F. Cody) which the state of Wyoming commissioned Mrs. Whitney to execute for the town he founded.

In 1926 Mrs. Whitney's monument, commemorating the landing of the American troops in France during the World War, was unveiled at St. Nazaire, on the French coast.

Mrs. Whitney has, of course, a keen appreciation of art, and in 1920-21 her collection of paintings by American artists was extensively exhibited abroad, and later in her own gallery in New York, where it was called "The Overseas Exhibition."

In the catalogue of this exhibit Mrs. Whitney, in the introduction, writes:

"Ever since the establishment of the Whitney gallery the idea of sending an informal group of American paintings to Europe has occurred to me... To me it has always seemed a good plan for artists working in America to show their work in Europe, the oftener the better. Our sympathy with French art was not born in a day...Innumerable exhibitions of French art...have been held in this country, and the European's understanding of our art will lack the necessary sympathy until they also have the opportunity to see in Europe repeated and varied exhibitions of American art."

Mrs. Whitney is also a patron of the opera and of letters and a member of the American Federation of Arts, the Association of Women Painters and Sculptors, National Institute of Social Science, International Historical Society, The National Arts, Cosmopolitan, and Colony Clubs.

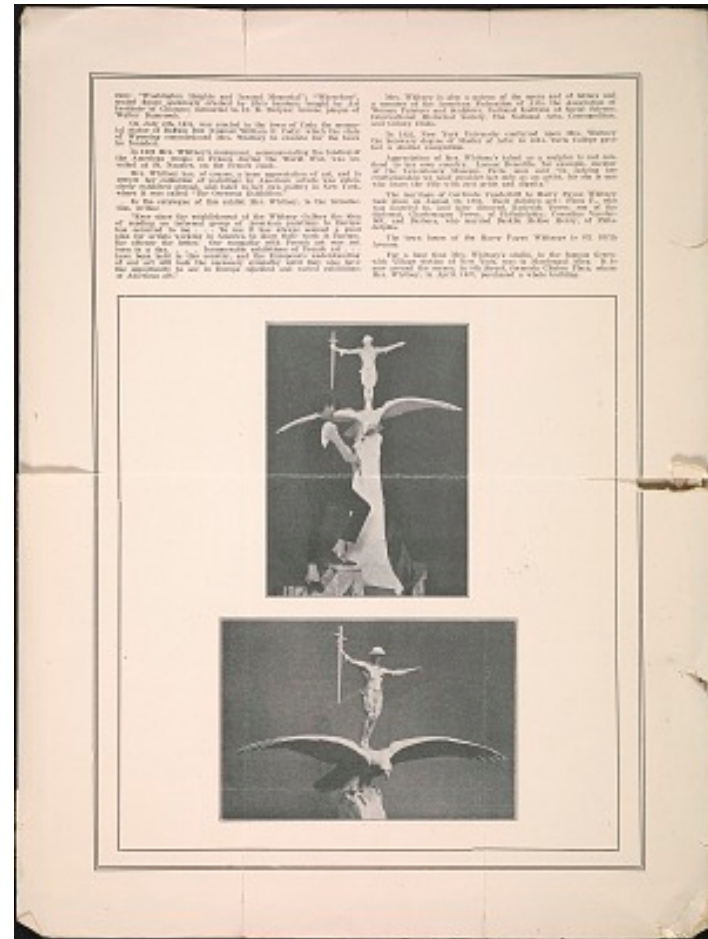
In 1922, New York University conferred upon Mrs. Whitney the honorary degree of Master of Arts; in 1924, Tufts College gave her a similar recognition.

Appreciation of Mrs. Whitney's talent as a sculptor is not confined to her own country. Leonce Benedite, for example, curator of the Luxembourg Museum, Paris, once said "In judging her craftsmanship we need consider her only as an artist, for she is one who bears the title with just pride and dignity."

The marriage of Gertrude Vanderbilt to Harry Payne Whitney took place on August 25, 1896. Their children are: Flora P., who was married to, and later divorced Roderick Tower, son of the diplomat, Charlemagne Tower, of Philadelphia; Cornelius Vanderbilt, and Barbara, who married Barklie McKee Henry, of Philadelphia.

The town house of the Harry Payne Whitneys is 871 Fifth Avenue.

For a long time Mrs. Whitney's studio, in the famous Greenwich Village section of New York, was in Macdougall Alley. It is now around the corner, in 8th Street, formerly Clinton Place, where Mrs. Whitney, in April 1927, purchased a whole building.



[[image - photograph of Mrs. Whitney working on a sculpture]]

[[image - photograph of the finished sculpture]]

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