

A LEGACY OF GLAMOUR





Oil painting of Nanaline Duke by Philip Alexius de Laszlo de Lombos, dated 1926.

She is wearing a pearl necklace and the oriental pearl ring (Fig. 21).

A LEGACY OF GLAMOUR:

The Jewelry of Nanaline Holt Inman Duke

Unlike her daughter, Nanaline Holt Inman Duke was not born to wealth. Having been raised in Macon, Georgia, in what was kindly referred to as “reduced circumstances,” Nanaline would have grown up haunted by a sense that fine jewelry was beyond her reach. With her first marriage to a prosperous businessman, William Inman, she could at last afford the kind of jewelry her mother owned before the family’s financial reverses in the post-Civil War years. When, as a widow in the early-twentieth century, she captured the heart of one of the richest men in the world, all financial barriers disappeared. After her marriage to James Buchanan Duke in 1907, the former Nanaline Holt could at last have anything she wanted, including the finest jewelry.

The great rope of pearls that she wears in her 1926 portrait is probably the one that James B. Duke bought for her in 1907 at J. Dreicer & Sons in New York, for the astonishing sum of \$180,000. (The invoice survives in the Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library.) In the days before the introduction of cultured pearls, a natural-pearl necklace like this was as precious as one set with diamonds. And, of course, not only did her husband buy her opulent gifts, but Nanaline Duke could also buy herself beautiful jewels—and she did.

The jewelry in this section defines Nanaline Duke’s taste and distinguishes it from that of her daughter Doris. Unlike Doris Duke, Nanaline did not venture outside the realm of the classic jewel, nor did she venture into exotic or artistic jewelry. Even when she purchased things that were similar in style to those her daughter was buying in the 1930s and 1940s, Nanaline favored the opulent glamour of the early-twentieth century, the era when railroad kings and oil kings and tobacco kings ruled society, and their wives bedecked themselves in jewels suited to the New World royalty they considered themselves to be. Whatever the differences in taste, it is evident that her mother’s love for fine, elegant jewelry made an indelible imprint on Doris Duke that encouraged the development of her own aesthetic values.

15. Diamond and pearl festoon necklace

1908

Diamonds, oriental pearl, platinum.

Approximate weight of pear-shaped diamond: 5.40 carats; approximate weight of cushion-cut diamond: 4.65 carats; approximate weight of marquise-cut diamond: 2.40 carats.

Jewelry from the *belle époque* period is reflective of the Louis XVI styles made popular by the sale of the French crown jewels in 1889. Necklaces were designed in festoons that elegantly draped around the neck. This necklace was made by Cartier with a selection of diamonds provided by James B. Duke. The original invoice is dated December 24, 1908.



16. Diamond and pearl tiara

Cartier, New York, no. 2419203

1924

Diamonds, oriental pearl, platinum.

Approximate weight of two pear-shaped diamonds:
2.70 and 2.27 carats.

The new industrial wealth of nineteenth-century America adopted the trappings of European nobility. Elaborate diamond-studded jewels graced the bodice of the well-dressed lady, while a tiara crowned her head. This tiara is believed to have been purchased at Cartier by Nanaline or James B. Duke on March 1, 1924, at a cost of \$23,000.

This tiara was included in the exhibition, *Tiara*, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in 2000 and was illustrated in the accompanying book, *Tiara*, by Diana Scarisbrick.



17. Diamond bracelet

Cartier, New York, no. 2716752

1927

L: 7 inches

Diamonds, platinum.

Approximate weight of marquise-cut diamond: 7.19 carats; of one pear-shaped diamond: 7.03 carats; of another pear-shaped diamond: 6.24 carats; of two remaining pear-shaped diamonds: 4.25 and 3.50 carats.

Nanaline Duke's love of large diamonds is evident in this bracelet. The geometric shapes of the large diamonds are juxtaposed with stepped motifs derived from architecture of ancient civilizations such as Babylonian ziggurats and Mayan and Aztec temples.





18. Pendant watch and chatelaine pin

On cuvette: Longines/Grand Prix/Paris/1889

Outer case: K18, maker's mark/783923

c. 1890

Diamonds, enamel, gold

H: 3 inches

This elegant watch probably dates from Nanaline Duke's first marriage. Chatelaine watches were typically worn on the lapel of a dress bodice during the daytime.

19. Pendant watch

Tiffany & Co., New York

c. 1900

Diamonds, emeralds, platinum, guilloché with transparent green and blue enamel.

H: 1 5/8 inches

Such exquisitely detailed ladies' watches were typical of the foremost American and European jewelry of the day.



20. Emerald-cut diamond ring

Tiffany & Co., New York

1935

Diamond, platinum; emerald-cut diamond weighing approximately 19.72 carats

According to Stephanie Mansfield in *The Richest Girl in the World*, Nanaline Duke lost her "\$40,000 diamond ring" at a bridge party. It was returned to her by a friend.



21. Oriental pearl ring

c. 1910

Oriental pearl, diamonds, platinum

Diameter of pearl: 9 mm.

Before Mikimoto perfected the cultured pearl, oriental pearls were as sought after and as costly as fine diamonds.

22. Pair of bracelets

c. 1930

Pearls, diamonds, platinum

L: 6 1/2 inches

Although the clasps on these bracelets are art deco in style, the pearls give a softness that evokes the early years of the twentieth century.



A Legacy of Glamour:



23. Diamond-set silk evening bag

Cartier, New York

1934

Diamonds, enamel, silk, platinum

H: 5 ¾ inches

The severely geometric black and white color scheme of this evening bag exemplifies the monochromatic aspect of the art deco style.





24. Diamond and ruby lapel watch

On dial: Jaeger / P.L. Levy

Outer case: no. 77639

c. 1925

Diamonds, rubies, platinum

H: 1 5/16 inches

By the mid 1920s, watch casing design had reached an art with designers creating novelty items such as ring watches, purse watches and, more rarely, lapel watches.

25. Pair of diamond and sapphire dress clips

American

1940-1945

Diamonds, sapphires, platinum

H: 2 inches

By the end of the 1930s, flowers were once again popular. Made in a variety of styles and materials, the most favored were diamond-set confections.



26. Diamond scroll ear clips

Cartier, New York

1933

Diamonds, platinum

H: 1 5/16 inches

Even after her husband's death, Nanaline Duke never lost her taste for jewelry. She purchased these ear clips from Cartier on November 22, 1933, for \$1,500.



A Legacy of Glamour:



27. Diamond wristwatch

Dial signed by Charlton & Co., New York; diamond bracelet by Cartier, New York

Charlton dial and movement, 1922; Cartier diamond bracelet, 1935
Diamonds, platinum

L: 6 3/4 inches

On December 20, 1922, James B. Duke purchased a diamond wristwatch with a pearl band from Charlton & Co. On January 29, 1935, Nanaline Duke had Cartier replace the pearl band with an elaborate diamond-set bracelet, retaining the original dial and movement.

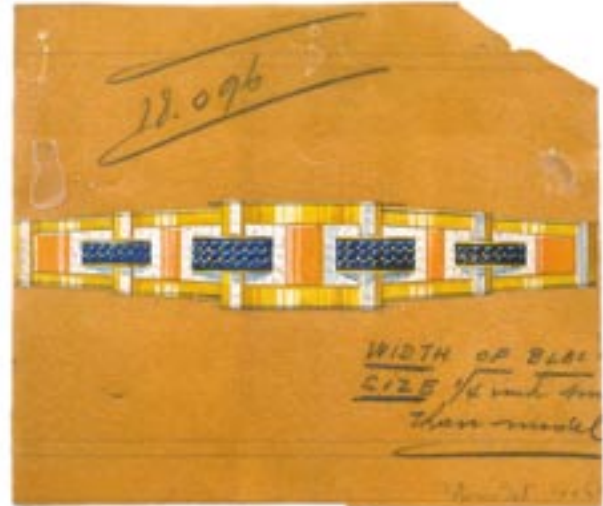
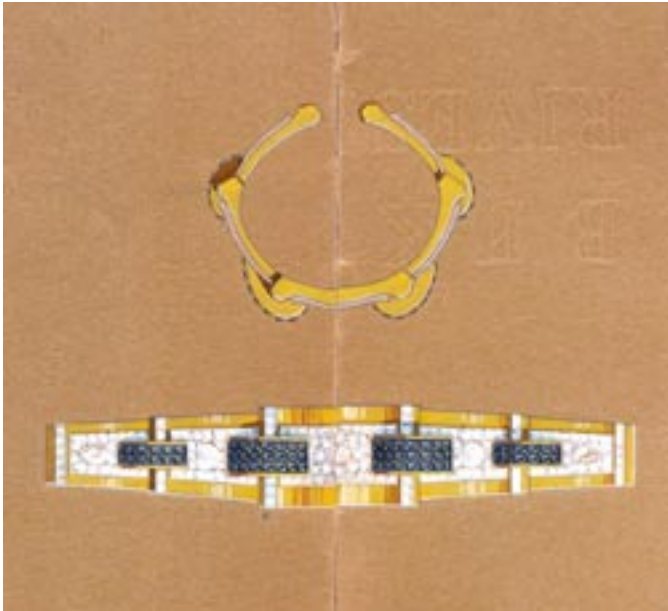


28. Diamond and sapphire bangle bracelet

Cartier, New York, no. 3918096

1939

Sapphires, diamonds, gold, platinum



A Legacy of Glamour:



29. Diamond and pearl bracelet

Cartier, New York, no. 3519688

c. 1920

Pearls, diamonds, platinum

L: 6 ½ inches

The design on this bracelet with a central diamond plaque from which strung pearls are attached is a modification of the choker necklace from the turn of the century.



30. Ceylon sapphire, pearl and diamond bracelet

Cartier, New York, no. 24121

1925

Ceylon sapphire, sapphires, diamonds, pearls, platinum.

Approximate weight of sapphire: 35.54 carats.

L: 6 ½ inches

James B. Duke continued to lavish gifts of jewelry on his wife right up to his death in 1925. He provided Cartier with the stones for this bracelet, but they did not receive the payment of \$5,630 for it until November 8, 1925, after James B. Duke's death.

