

Simply Charming! The History of Charm Bracelets

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An object in possession seldom retains the same charm that it had in pursuit.

- Pliny the Younger, 63 to c. 113

He obviously did not collect charm bracelets!



The word “charm” originated from the Latin term “Carmen” meaning “song” which, in turn, relates to the ability to enchant. Charm bracelets are the perfect map of a full life lived. They are building blocks for a huge amount of different life stories – no two the same. They record an individual’s experiences, thereby creating an album of treasured moments.

Figure 1. A grouping of gold, enamel, diamond, gem, pearl, mechanicals, and others (Zabar, 10).

Charm bracelets, which have a long and rich history, are enjoying a new beginning. The wearing of charms reaches back to prehistoric times where they were the earliest form of personal adornment. Ancient peoples relied upon amulets and other lucky charms to ward off the “evil eye” and other bad spirits. Then they held fast to religious charms promising fertility and love.

Once Upon a Time

Charms date back to the Neolithic era where man would pick up an unusual stone or piece of wood and carry it with him to ward off his enemies. Elaborate jewelry made of precious stones and metals appeared during the age of the Egyptian Pharaohs. It was during this time that

the first identifiable charm bracelets and necklaces made their appearance. The first charm bracelets were probably worn by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and Hittites from 500 to 400 B.C. Those charms were made of lapis lazuli, rock crystal, and other gems and were inscribed with small designs, such as figures of gods, man, and animals. They were immediately associated with special powers.

Like people of many ancient civilizations, the nation of ancient Egypt lived very short lives by today's standard - 30 to 40 years on average. With so little time on earth, they obsessively prepared for a prosperous life after death. Charm bracelets played a noteworthy role in the preparation process. Charm wrist and neck bracelets were not only desirable as protective shields and signs of status in this life, they were also worn as identifying tags to help the Gods guide the wearer and his/her possessions to the proper status level in the afterlife.

In the dark days of the Middle Ages, charms and amulets were used by knights and kings. They were most often utilized with incantations to wreak havoc on the occupants of enemy castles as well as protect warriors in battle. Charms were also worn on belts to represent family origin, political standing, and profession.

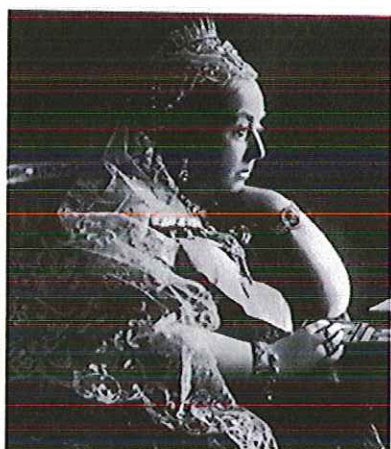
General wearing of charms began to lose favor with the wealthy classes during the Renaissance as superstitions faded. However, charms and amulets were still widely used by people of lesser wealth and education. By the 1700 and 1800's, personalized and miniature jewels were all the rage, particularly among the rich and royals. The wealthy treasured miniatures, tiny paintings of loved ones on pendants, bracelets, and pins. The role of the charm remained relatively unchanged until the early 1900s. Between 1900 and 1935 charms were frequently called *bangles* or *pendants*. In fact, through the 1930's, the term *bangle bracelet* was used frequently to describe most any charm bracelet.

Charms During the Victorian Era

By the 1890's charms had evolved from a spiritual protector to a fashion statement. Reserved Victorians enjoyed jewelry that modestly hinted at their romantic relationships. Bracelets were particularly important and the fashion was to wear more than one at a time on each wrist. Little charms held bits and pieces of locks snipped from a lover's head.

The Queen of Charm – Queen Victoria

In Victorian England, where elegant and ornate jewelry was the style, charm bracelets



were standard fixtures. Queen Victoria (1819-1901) further popularized the trend by wearing a charm bracelet of small lockets containing family portraits. The trend-setting Queen Victoria also started the craze for mourning jewelry crafted with tiny remembrances. Queen Victoria imbued charms with sentimentality and romanticism, which is how we view charms today.

Figure 2. Queen Victoria understood the symbolic power of jewelry. One of her bracelets contained lockets with locks of her children's hair along with their miniature portrait (Albert and Hackney, 16).

Queen Victoria was totally devoted to charms and even adopted the custom of surrounding the body with personal charm jewelry in death. The queen stipulated that 150 personal charms and sentimental treasures should accompany her in her grave.

In the early 20th century, the bracelets of Queen Victoria ignited the next big wave of charm wearing. It was at this stage that charms had a dramatic change of purpose. They went

from being practical tools to becoming decorative fashion jewelry. Small lockets, glass beads, and family crests that hung on bracelets and necklaces were extremely popular.

By the end of the Victorian era, the use of charms as sentimental costume jewelry was no longer confined to nobles and queens. The Industrial Revolution of the mid-19th century made metal charms available in quantity, and at lower prices. Through the Victorian society, young couples began exchanging diminutive charms.

Art Deco Era

The stylish Art Deco era, a major period for jewelry that set the cornerstone for modern designs, saw gorgeous bracelets featuring dangling elements. These early examples were usually designed with gems set in platinum and featured thin, sleek charms that were often one-sided. Then the world was at war for the second time and the importance of “sweetheart” mementos and jewels came into play.

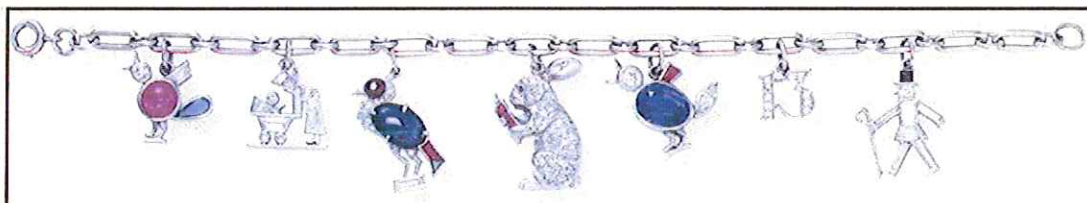
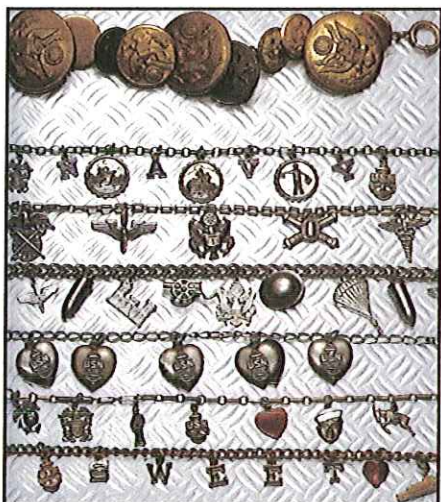


Figure 3. Art deco diamond, precious gems and platinum charm bracelet, ca. 1925. Signed “Cartier, valued at \$12-18,000 (Schwartz, 57).

The Greatest Generation

The end of WWII saw the explosion of charm jewelry as we know it today. In the trenches, coins were fashioned into art and crudely engraved with messages of love. Back home, women wore inexpensive jewelry proclaiming their status as a sweetheart, and sister or wife of a soldier. Soldiers leaving Europe and islands in the Pacific purchased little handmade trinkets as

gifts to bring home to their sweethearts. Soldiers often picked up charms from every city they



visited during World War II, and the fashion trend itself continued into times of peace. Native craftsmen fashioned small bits of metal into little replicas of items common to the locale. Enterprising jewelers in the States quickly picked up on the trend and began creating charms for all occasions.

Figure 4. Keepsake charms from WWII (Albert and Hackney, 99).



Military motifs made their way into jewelry of the era – airplanes, miniature servicemen, stars and stripes, etc. Jacqueline Cochran, the first woman to pilot a bomber across the North Atlantic, was photographed in 1941 wearing a lucky bracelet with thirteen charms. She never made a flight without it.

Figure 5. German good luck bracelet, circa 1960 (Schwartz, 151).

Many factories produced a sizeable array of charms during the 1930s and 1940s. Charms and bracelets were available at virtually any price range. It is not clear if charm's affordability made them more popular or vice versa.

The 1940's and 1950's

According to Joyce Jonas, president of the American Society of Jewelry Historians,



charm bracelets were the most popular in the U.S. in the 1940's and 1950's. The charm craze was fueled by the increasingly influential worlds of fashion and celebrity spread through the mass media via magazines and movies. Sartorial icon Coco Chanel hung her jewelry with clinking coins. She was a fan of the concept of piling jewelry on in abundance. Her coin bracelets struck a chord and the

Figure 6. This is a publicity photo of screen legend Claudette Colbert and she is shown wearing one of her most treasured possessions – her gold charm bracelet (Albert and Hackney, 80).

look was quickly picked up by style setters like Lauren Bacall, who wore one for a *Harper's Bazaar* photo in 1944. Hollywood stars of the day clinked through many a movie wearing loud charm bracelets (Zabar, 22). Most 40's era charms were not rhodium plated so they tend to show wear and patination while charms made in the 1950s remain shiny (Schwartz, 83).

The 1950's marked the golden years. Charm bracelets perfectly complemented the three-quarter length sleeves in vogue. It seemed as though every woman had to have a charm bracelet and, in fact, every woman could. While the most valuable were made of platinum or higher karat gold (usually 14 or 18), with precious and semi-precious stones, everyday charm bracelets were made of affordable base metals, often called pot metal, as well as sterling silver and 9- and 10-karat gold.

Jingling sweetly, imbued with sentiment, charm bracelets have an appeal that has never quite faded away. One of hottest fashion trends of the 1950's, the charm bracelets served as tender reminders of one's girlhood. Travels, interests, and milestones were chronicled. During



the 50's era, the charm bracelet was a must-have accessory for girls and women. Major rites of passage including 16th birthdays, graduations, weddings, travel, and the arrival of children were all recorded on the links of their bracelets. Today some of these vintage bracelets sell for two to three thousand dollars at auction.

Figure 7. State Charms (Zabar, 83).

The poster girl for charm bracelets in the 1950's was Lucille Ball. Both Lucy and Desi's moms wore charm bracelets all the time. Lucy herself wore a prized gold bracelet celebrating the musical career of Desi. Lucy and Desi created an adorable charm bracelet as well. Little Lucie's bracelet had a grand piano that opened, a wishing well, a whistle that worked, a ballerina, a carousel pony, an enameled clown, a decorated birthday cake, and a frying pan with an enameled egg. Desi even added to her charm bracelet as she was growing up. A heart from 1959 says, "Love Daddy" and a 1963 calendar has Lucie's birthday marked with a ruby. Her husband continued the family tradition and gave Lucy a bracelet with a trumpet charm symbolizing a show she once did, a top hat, a cane for her dancing, and a heart made of rubies for her birthstone.

The torch was passed to the next generation as parents bought a child-sized bracelet to celebrate the birth of a daughter and presented her with a new charm bracelet each year. Girls eagerly signed up to receive a series of 12 charms from Charm-of-the-Month clubs or saved up



their babysitting money to buy themed charms in honor of wholesome hobbies like bowling and scouting. Little girls took trips with their parents around the country and brought home souvenirs like a bucking bronco charm from the Wild West or a mini Statue of Liberty from the Big Apple to hang from their bracelets (Zabar, 28).

Figure 8. Teen charm bracelets (Albert and Hackney, 74).

Bobby Soxers collected silver charms of high school mementos – school books, penny loafers, and footballs. Campus coeds donned bracelets with sorority and fraternity pins and Phi Beta Kappa keys as the never-take-it-off accessory to go with their saddle shoes and poodle skirts. Best friends always knew what to get one another for that perfect birthday present.

Many women start collecting charms as pre-teens. The most common scenario is a mother giving her daughter a charm bracelet, either as a new gift or passing on a family heirloom bracelet. Then, the daughter adds her own charms representing her favorite hobbies, sports, and



interests. As the daughter matures, so does her charm bracelet. Eventually, that same bracelet may hold a graduation cap, college insignia, the Eiffel Tower, wedding bells, and locket of her children.

Figure 9. A sterling silver bracelet with engraved names on the front of each charm along with birth dates on the reverse. On the bottom, a gold family bracelet (Zabar, 79).

Charms and Young Women

The charm bracelet began to disappear from the fashion scene during the early 1970s. It was the end of the fascination with charms. The times they were a-changing and the seemingly insatiable charm bracelet craze that exploded across the nation right after WWII ended brusquely with the 1960s and the woman's movement of the 1970's. The formerly respectable homemaker's goal of marriage and motherhood were left behind in favor of high-powered careers and "finding yourself." So important to women's rights, this era of hippies and career girls was the death knell of those oh-so-girly bracelets. Ladylike was out and free love was in – the generation gap had widened.

Modern women no longer sought the outmoded tokens of girlhood and thousands of charm bracelets got buried in the bottom of jewelry boxes. When the price of gold and silver rose through the stratosphere in the early 1980's, many neglected charm bracelets were either pawned or sold for scrap to be melted down and lost forever. New-money heirs uninterested in the old jewelry of their dead relatives were liquidating huge estates. Charms that had been out of circulation for decades were showing up in antique stores and flea markets. Savvy buyers snapped them up at cheap prices. Charm bracelets were in one word – OUT!

Charm Braces Come Full Circle

The boom in collectibles in the 1990s drove a huge demand for vintage charms and charm bracelets. A gold charm costing \$10 in 1950 now easily commands \$70 to \$80. Vintage mechanical charms (charms with moving parts) often sell for over \$100 and are highly prized by serious collectors. Even with the advent of massive buying and selling arenas like eBay, prices for vintage gold charms remain strong and show no sign of decline in the new century.

We've now come full circle and charm bracelets are hot again. Why? Perhaps we can chalk it up to embracing a sense of nostalgia or a need to have something undeniably personal again in a fast changing impersonal world. Most importantly – a new comfortableness with who we are as women.

Like a scrapbook, a collection of charms is highly personal. Walk down the street wearing one and a woman will stop you in your tracks to share stories about her own treasured charm bracelet, her Mothers or even her Grandmothers. Charm bracelets encourage a connection like quilts or samplers; they are a woman's art. They are an autobiography on a chain. Charm bracelets draw the eye to one's wrist, where a compelling tale unfolds.

Charm Examples and Types

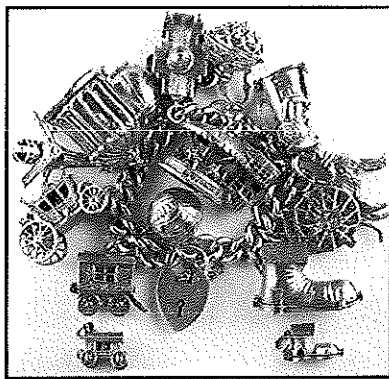
Container Charms – Designed to hold something within like a little bottle or some type of container for a baby tooth, or a lock of hair. A locket is a variation of this type.

Couture Charms – Produced by a well-known jeweler or designed by a famous couturier (fashion designer).

Document Charms – Engravable charms like birth or marriage certificates, birthdates, calendars or messages. The calendar charms were quite in vogue and they commemorate an event in a month and year that has significance to the wearer. Frequently a diamond or other gem would be used to denote a birthday or anniversary.

Figural/3-D Charms – Probably the most popular and widely available. Examples include animals, people, buildings, etc.

Gumball Charms - Made of celluloid (an early plastic) they are charms and little prizes that came out of gumball machines and candy boxes in the 1940s. These charms were collected by kids and worn on bracelets and necklaces of string and beaded chain (dog tag chain). Many of the themes are common - jungle animals, sports, sailing ships, army men, and family pets. But there were a number of commercial applications as well, primarily from comic strips. Popeye, Betty Boop, Mickey Mouse, the Seven Dwarfs, Orphan Annie are just a few examples.



Mechanical – Charms that have some element that moves – example – candles on a cake that pop up when you push a lever, or arrow that points to yes or no (love meter).

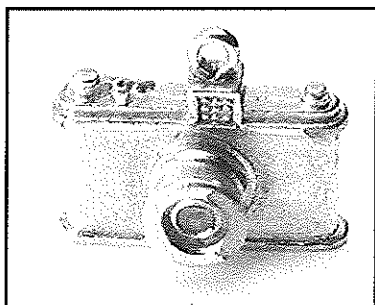
Figure 10. Charm bracelet featuring several “mechanicals”, ca. 1964 (Schwartz, 6).

Medallion-style – Bracelets featuring a single large medallion were introduced shortly before WWII. Many Hollywood notables sported them. In 1937, Joan Crawford appeared in a publicity photo wearing a single oversized gem-encrusted charm. The style became widespread in the 40s since it appealed to the post-war trendsetter’s yen for extravagance (Schwartz, 86).

Openers – Charms that have hinges that allow tiny doors of the entire charm to open, often revealing a clever surprise (Schwartz, 147).

Political – Political letter jewelry let party enthusiasts campaign for their man with a jingle of a wrist. Examples were worn for Eisenhower, Kennedy, Nixon, and Lodge (Zabar, 29).

Spinners, Silhouette, Flat Charms – Self explanatory



Stanhope Charms – These vintage charms usually have a little peephole covered in a magnifying glass. On the inside you see a miniscule series of words or images, often a prayer or the constitution, or scenes like San Francisco etched on glass.

Figure 11. Monet camera with U.S. flag view, post-1960 (Schwartz, 127).



Telescope Watch Charms			NOVELTY PIG CHARM
 <p>LORD'S PRAYER Telescope Watch Charm, selected quality, made of brass. Contains the Lord's Prayer. Sharp lens magnifies the Prayer so it can be read easily. A unique novelty.</p> <p>No. 81331. Per piece 7.50 Per dozen 65</p>	<p>TEN COMMANDMENTS Bong Telescope Watch Charm or Ornament. Contains the Ten Commandments. Greatly magnified.</p> <p>No. 81333. Per piece 7.50 Per dozen 65</p>	<p>BATHING BEAUTIES Bong Telescope Watch Charm or Ornament. Contains a view of actresses and bathing beauties. Greatly magnified.</p> <p>No. 81332. Per piece 5.50 Per dozen 50</p>	 <p>Pig Charm. Gift watch has view with assorted pictures of Bathing Beauties and Actresses. A novelty charm, very much in demand.</p> <p>No. 81330. Per piece 7.00 Per dozen 60</p>

Figure 12. Stanhope ad from Shure Catalog, 1940 (Schwartz, 127).

Charming Tales

Published in 1936, the 13th book in the popular Nancy Drew series was The Mystery of the Ivory Charm. In the story, Nancy investigates a suspect circus and whether an ivory elephant charm really protects its wearer from harm (Zabar, 23).

A sweet little charm bracelet featuring sweet little Shirley Temple was first made by Monocraft (later by Monet).

The television show, *This is Your Life*, often presented charm bracelets to female guests who appear on the show and told the story of their lives and careers (Zabar, 26).

The character of Alice, played by Audrey Meadows on the T.V. program, *The Honeymooners*, sported a big, chunky charm bracelet or two (Zabar, 26).

A 1950's magazine feature exclaimed, "There's a charm for every woman, whether her purse affords 50 cents for twinkling nickel or hundreds of dollars for gold and gems."

The 1963 Doris Day movie, "Move Over Darling" had an amusing running joke throughout the story about two very loud clanging charm bracelets (worn by Polly Bergen) that drove a judge and everyone else in the courtroom mad (Zabar, 26).

Walt Disney won 22 Oscars. He bought his wife a charm bracelet full of scaled-down Oscars for each of the real ones he won between 1931 and 1964 (Zabar, 48).



Did Jackie Onasis wear charm bracelets? She was occasionally photographed wearing bracelets that made a singular statement with just one large charm. She also owned a gold link bracelet with 25 charms, which was sold at the Sotheby's auction in 1996 (Zabar, 49)

Interestingly, President John F. Kennedy himself had two charm bracelets. They were kept in the drawer where his son was so famously photographed poking his head out of a little door in the bottom. JFK had a special drawer where he kept special mementos – one was an Irish themed bracelet with a shamrock, a horseshoe and charms spelling out J.F. Kennedy and was sold at Sothebys for \$32,000. The other one had one charm, a horse head, and on the reverse – Macaroni – the name of Caroline's pony was engraved. The links spelled out the name Caroline (Zabar, 49).

Figure 13. President Kennedy and Jackie (Albert and Hackney, 102).

Mrs. Babe Ruth had a 14K gold bracelet that held seven charms that were a testament to her larger-than-life husband's love and mastery of the game of baseball – a baseball bat, a cap with 1927 engraved on the brim for the year Babe hit his record 60th homerun, a ball engraved 60 to commemorate the same, a shoe with cleats, a base, and batting figure with the number 3 engraved on the back (Zabar, 50) and a rectangular charm with a baseball coat of arms. It sold at Sothebys in 1999 for nearly fourteen times the estimated amount of sale.

Assembling Charm Bracelets

Charm bracelets can be assembled in two different ways. Some charm bracelets come complete and pre-assembled with a set of charms. The charms of these pre-fab bracelets are united by a shared style, shape, or theme. Many were known as "letter jewelry" and they spelled out nicknames like *Sweetie Pie*, *Honey*, etc. (Zabar, 31). Another practice is to collect and connect charms to a bracelet gradually – collect and connect bracelets are frequently autographical, commendatory life events with bits of metal (Schwartz, 9). It helps to hang one charm, usually the heaviest opposite the clasp so gravity works in your favor. The clasp stays on top and your charm bracelet is always perfectly positioned on your wrist (Zabu, 62-63).

Metals (Schwartz, 10-13)

Silver – strong, easy to work with, does not develop tarnish and patina (series of tiny scratches that develop as a result of wear).



Figure 14. A sterling silver (circa 1960) ten commandment charm bracelet (Zabar, 67).

Platinum – extremely hard, grayish metal. Not widely used to make charms but it was used in the Art Deco-style charm bracelets in the 1920s and 30s.

Rhodium – another member of the platinum family. It played an important role in the manufacture of charms. Used as a plating agent. A very thin layer provides a long-wearing silvery shine. It also inhibits formation of tarnish. Gained acceptance during the 1930s.

White-gold – first used in jewelry manufacturing about 1910. It is an alloy or blend of yellow-gold and either platinum or silver does not tarnish. It has not been widely used in the production of charms.

Base Metal – variety of non-precious metals used in the production of jewelry. Nickel silver is the generic name for any of a range of non-precious bright silvery-gray alloys composed of copper, nickel, and zinc.

Gold – popular since ancient times. It stays bright and resists fading and tarnishing.

Rolled gold or gold filled – created by bonding a sheet of gold to a sheet of base metal. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, gold-filled items were made with a fairly generous portion of gold.

Gold plated – contains less gold than similar gold-filled pieces.

Vermeil – made from sterling silver that has been coated with a thin layer of gold. A gold-colored charm stamped “sterling silver” indicates the use of the vermeil technique.



Figure 15. This gold bracelet celebrates 24 years of marriage with charms of gold, gems, pearls, and diamonds (Circa 1905) (Zabar, 51).

Copper – reddish metal that is relatively abundant and inexpensive. During the 1950s and 60s, jewelry made from copper was quite fashionable.

Brass – mellow golden hue. It has an alloy of two inexpensive metallic elements, copper and



zinc. Its low price and its use in poorly made items have given brass a negative image. Vintage brass items, however, can be quite attractive.

Figure 16. Charm bracelet circa 1985 featuring mixed metals (Schwartz, 13).

Plastics

Celluloid – Invented in 1863, it was one of the first plastics used in jewelry. At first it was used to mimic tortoise shell. It was well suited for producing novelty items such as charms, due to its reasonable cost.



Figure 17. Brass charm bracelet with celluloid charms, ca. 1930 (Schwartz, 14)

Bakelite – Patented by Dr. Leo Baekeland (1863-1944) in 1907, bakelite was first used commercially in the first decade of the 20th century. Produced in vibrant colors and well suited for whimsical designs, bakelite bangle-style bracelets were tremendously popular from the 1920s to the 1940s. Bakelite charm bracelets were not as popular as the bangle-style bracelets.



Figure 18. A wild collection of wood, plastic bakelite, celluloid, bone and metal charms (Zabar, 66).

The Language of Charms

Amethyst – The birthstone for February is known to encourage sincerity, piety, and even celibacy. The ancients believed amethyst to be a strong antidote to drunkenness.

Angel – Angels are messengers of God, almighty spirits embodying goodness, mercy, justice, majesty, and wisdom.

Aquamarine – The birthstone for March, this sea-water blue stone is said to attract love and encourage new friendships. For married couples, the aquamarine is said to help promote a long, happy union.

Bear – Classically aligned with Diana, goddess of the moon, the image of a bear (or its claws) is a symbol of diplomacy, strength, bravery, and physical and spiritual health and well-being.

Bell – Since ancient times, bells have been worn to combat the evil eye.

Buddha figurines – Symbolize happiness, kindness, and joy, and protect against sudden death. They are also said to bring wealth if their tummies are rubbed.

Cat – Cats embody mystery, playfulness, independence, sensuality, and self-confidence. They are a combination of the physical and the spiritual. As a charm, the cat is considered a lucky omen.

Coral – is thought to protect children from harm, acute stomach and eye maladies, bring wisdom and reason, evoke flow and change in life, thwart the evil eye, and, as Pliny once said, quiet tempests.

Cross – Adopted as the symbol of Christianity as far back as the 4th century A.D., the cross was used for many centuries as a defense against evil spirits.

Daisy – symbolizes innocence, like a human eye, this flower has a center that looks like a pupil, and at night, the flower closes its petals in rest.

Diamond – the birthstone for April, the diamond is the hardest of all gemstones. They symbolize invulnerability and incorruptibility, and are associated with love, marriage, joy, excellence, and purity.

Dog – canines stand for fidelity, reliability, and watchfulness. In the Chinese zodiac, a person born in the Year of the Dog is honest, intelligent, loyal, reliable, and just.

Dolphin – Ancient Egyptian Copts decorated garments with dolphin motifs, which are thought to have symbolized salvation and protection. Ulysses considered the dolphin a symbol of love, devotion, and hard work.

Egg – Eggs are ancient symbols of love and fertility. In a Christian context, the egg commemorates the resurrection of Christ.

Elephant – In Hindu mythology, Ganesh, the elephant-headed son of Shiva and Parvati, is the remover of obstacles and the god of domestic harmony, and prosperity. In general, elephants symbolize enormous strength, wisdom, courage, and success.

Emerald – The birthstone for May, the emerald's green color symbolizes spring, fertility, and eternal youth, as well as honesty, and tranquility.

Fish – Sumerians and Babylonians fashioned fish amulets that date back to approximately 2,500 B.C. They symbolize fertility, virility, wealth, and abundance.

Frog – To the ancient Egyptians, the frog represented fertility and regeneration and frog amulets were often buried within the wrappings of a mummy to guarantee rebirth into the next life. Today, frog amulets are worn for positive energy, and are associated with longevity.

Garnet – The birthstone for January symbolizes faith, loyalty, and truth, and is thought to help deflect evil thoughts, and improve intelligence.

Goldfish – First bred in China, these members of the carp family are the bearers of good fortune, prosperity, beauty, and harmony.

Horseshoe – Horseshoes promise luck and protection – place them upward and your luck will never run out; downward and luck can pour over you.

Insects – Common subjects for charms, many of which have symbolic meaning.

Jade – Used for amulets in Western Asia since 4,000 B.C., and also by Ancient Egyptians and Aztecs, jade is thought to aid in childbirth and heal stomach and intestinal problems. It is associated with hope, faithfulness, and protection.

Key – A key can symbolize the opening of doors (to opportunity, for example, or knowledge) or the unlocking of secrets. A key is also a popular way to give your lover custody of your heart.

Ladybug – The red ladybug is a time-honored harbinger of good luck.

Lamb – The lamb is a classic symbol of peace.

Lion – the Symbol of a lion promotes good health and prosperity, and it is also thought to be a valuable protector during travels. Lions also represent strength, bravery, and honor.

Moon – The moon, identified with the goddess Diana, offers the power to accomplish everyday chores. It is one of the governing planets of the zodiac; Crescent moons are thought to enhance moods, emotions, instincts, and intuition.

Onyx – Onyx represents chastity and midnight. The stone is said to encourage good fortune, enhance self-control, and banish grief. In the Victorian era, onyx, because of its hue, was regarded as an appropriate stone for mourning jewelry.

Opal – the birthstone for October, like the pearl, represents innocence and purity. For children, opals are believed to bring good fortune.

Owl – Owls represent wisdom, knowledge, truth, reason, and protection. Owl charms are given to honor an educational achievement.

Pansy – the pansy is associated with thoughts, memories, and merriment.

Pearl – the birthstone for June symbolizes innocence and purity. Pearls also are associated with romance, love, and marriage. They are said to bring health and good luck.

Peridot – the birthstone for August is a symbol of good luck, success, and happiness and is believed to promote friendship and marriage.

Pig – Despite their less desirable present-day associations, pigs have long been a symbol of sincerity, honesty, reliability, intelligence, and kindness.

Rose – Ancient cultures value this flower as a symbol of love, achievement, and perfection. Today we associate this flower with love, passion, and respect (red rose), joy and friendship (yellow rose), gratitude and admiration (pink) and humility (white).

Ruby – the birthstone for July, the ruby is synonymous with power and passion. Rubies are thought to thwart evil, dispel sadness and discord, and protect their wearers from deceitful friendships.

Sapphire – The birthstone for September symbolizes truth, sincerity, and the ability to make dreams come true. They are also thought to bring their wearers comfort, and constancy in marriage.

Seashell – The cowrie shell's history as an amulet can be traced back more than 20,000 years, commonly as an evil eye, and secondly, as a fertility symbol. The scallop shell is associated with beauty, romance, and femininity.

Star – Stars stand for truth, guidance, and enlightenment. The classic five-pointed pentagram is a symbol of protection and balance.

Sun – the sun symbolizes eternity, power, hope, and divinity.

Topaz – the birthstone for November is associated with the sun. Topazes were also used to cure asthma, reverse insomnia, and improve eyesight.

Turtle – The turtle is a symbol of both heaven (their shell) and earth (their undersides). Turtles also symbolize longevity and immortality.

Tulip – The tulip symbolized perfect love or a declaration of love.

Turquoise – The birthstone for December symbolizes prosperity, courage, and success. When given as a gift, turquoise is considered to be a promise of friendship. The most popular of all amuletic stones, it is credited with a wide variety of protective properties.

Unicorn – unicorns represent purity, chivalry, gentleness, and independence.

Violet – The violet is a symbol of modesty and simplicity.

Wishbone – A wishbone promises good luck when two people make a wish and then pull the sides apart. The one holding the longest piece will have his or her wish come true.

Yin-Yang – the circular black-and-white Yin-Yang symbol represents the union and balance of opposing forces throughout the universe of female yin and male yang.

(Source: Albert and Hackney, 150-154)

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Figure 19. Curb link bracelet with puffy heart charms, each engraved with the giver's name, c. 1938 (Schwartz, 117).