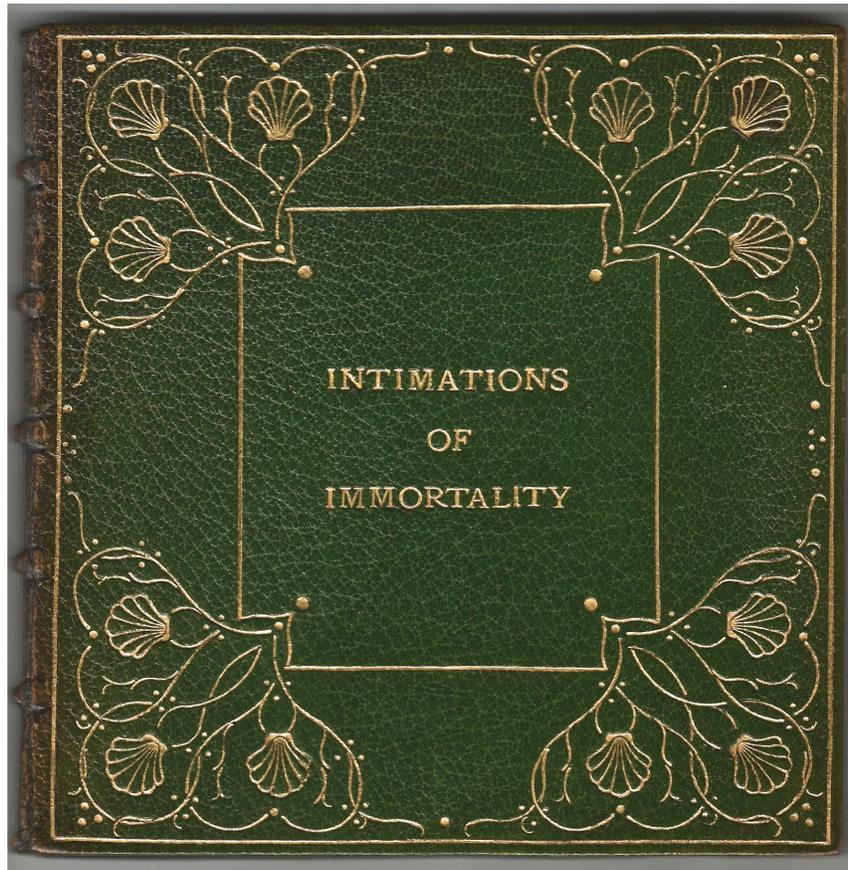


An Ellen Gates Starr Binding Revisited



Strangely enough, I had two researchers contact me about an Ellen Gates Starr binding they saw pictured on the Mosher Press website (or posted on Pinterest or on a blog). The book they saw on the Internet from the Mosher Press collection is pictured above and described below:

Wordsworth, William. *Intimations of Immortality—An Ode*. Portland, ME: Thomas Bird Mosher, 1908. From Mosher's "Golden Text Series." Although published in 1908, the book was only specially bound in 1911 by Ellen Gates Starr and inscribed by Starr on front endpaper:

*M.P.D. & F.A.D.
In Memoriam
Matilda
January 29.
E.G.S.*

Even though I've had the binding for several years, I neglected to do any research on the inscription. Today the mystery of the inscription has been finally unlocked. The treasured story revealed is this: Ellen Gates Starr had purpose in mind when binding the *Intimations of Immortality*. She knew the recipients well, in fact dined with them. Along the way I found that a Mrs. Matilda P. Delano, along with Ellen Gates Starr and three other women, signed the "Articles of Association" forming a non-profit corporation called the "Chicago Public School Art Society." I also discovered mention of Mrs. Delano in the *Selected Papers of Jane Addams* [Vol. 2, p. 645] which appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* for June 1, 1943; however, these little tidbits were only provisional to the bull's-eye obituary uncovered which appeared in the *New York Times* for April 2, 1911 which I recreate here:

DELANO.—On March 31, 1911, after a brief illness, Matilda, youngest daughter of Frederic A. and Matilda P. Delano, aged 12 years. Funeral services for the family and intimate friends on Sunday, April 2, at 2:30 P.M., at the home of the parents, 510 Wellington Av., Chicago, Ill.

So now it's known that the little book of 1908 was selected by Ellen Gates Starr to be put into a special "tribute" binding to be given as a memorial to her friend and colleague, Mrs. Matilda P. Delano. This was apparently a gift-in-the-making in that the daughter Matilda, died on March 31, 1911. The binding is dated 1911 but the inscription reads January 29. The January in question had to be Monday, January 29, 1912. Sometime between March 31, 1911 and the end of the year or shortly thereafter EGS would have taken it upon herself to select the proper text and prepare this binding to be presented to her friend.

By the way, the *Kingsport Times* for June 1, 1943 states: "Deaths Last Night / (by The Associated Press) Mrs. Matilda P. Delano / Newburgh, N.Y. — Mrs. Matilda P. Delano, 75, aunt of President Roosevelt and wife of Col. Frederic A. Delano, chairman of the National Resources Planning Commission." Mrs. Delano was not your average society member. Then again, neither was Ellen Gates Starr.

Philip R. Bishop
30 January 2015