

MOM'S JOY ROOM

2964 Fairmont Road, Morgantown, WV 26501 | (304) 282-3671

CERTIFICATE OF PROVENANCE, DESCRIPTION & VALUATION

Antique 27" Wax Doll — Documented Kentucky Provenance — c.1882–1885

MARKET VALUE

\$650–1,100

27" antique wax doll with original costume & boots — documented named-owner provenance

ESTIMATED WORTH

\$1,200–2,000

Specialty collector/museum ceiling — lifelong companion provenance of Anna Helen Ely Huston (1875–1961)

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION & NOTABLE INFORMATION

- ♦ **Doll Name:** "Anna" — named for and companion to her original owner
- ♦ **Date of Manufacture:** Circa 1882–1885
- ♦ **Height:** 27 inches — extraordinarily large for a wax doll of this period
- ♦ **Head:** Wax or wax-over construction — luminous, lifelike complexion
- ♦ **Eyes:** Blue glass — fixed, period construction
- ♦ **Hair:** Dark curly hair with pink satin ribbon bow
- ♦ **Costume:** White dotted Swiss lace dress, pink ribbon sash, white pantalettes with pink trim, original black leather boots
- ♦ **Pose:** Articulated — designed for sitting display
- ♦ **Provenance:** Lifelong companion of Anna Helen Ely Huston (1875–1961) — documented



"Across eighty-six years of life's changing tides, two Annas walked hand in hand — a little girl who grew into a woman, and the silent, beautiful keeper of her childhood dreams."

DOCUMENTED PROVENANCE

Lifelong Companion of Anna Helen Ely Huston (1875–1961)

This extraordinary 27-inch antique wax doll has been preserved with an unbroken, documented pedigree. Gifted to Anna Helen Ely during her childhood (circa 1882–1885), the doll became her lifelong companion. Anna Helen was the daughter of Eleazer Arelous Ely (1841–1929), a prominent 19th-century Fulton County glove manufacturer, and Lydia Guest Edwards Ely (1843–1889). Following her mother's passing when Anna Helen was fourteen, the doll remained a precious connection to her childhood home. She later married William Bunn Huston, operator of the historic Leroy Huston & Son grist mill and store at Hector Station, Schuyler County, New York, and relocated to Hector, NY, where she kept the doll for the rest of her long life until her passing in 1961. The doll remained in her private family collection for over eighty years — a remarkable, unbroken chain of documented ownership spanning the doll's entire existence.

HISTORY

In the 1880s, the art of wax dollmaking represented the pinnacle of childhood luxury. The wax or wax-over technique — applying a delicate, translucent layer of tinted beeswax over a molded head — produced a soft, glowing, skin-like complexion that pure bisque or porcelain could not replicate. This gave dolls of this era a warmth and realism that was extraordinarily prized by Victorian families of means. However, wax is a fragile medium: vulnerable to heat, sunlight, dust, and the simple passage of time. Very few wax dolls of this scale — measuring an imposing 27 inches — have survived into the 21st century without severe cracking, melting, or deterioration of the facial wax. Anna's survival in good condition across more than 140 years is remarkable in itself.

What elevates Anna from a rare antique to an irreplaceable treasure is her documented lifelong provenance. In the antique doll market, over 95% of Victorian dolls are separated from their original owners — their names, stories, and histories lost to time. For a doll to be preserved with the specific name, birth and death dates, and life history of its original owner — especially across a full human lifetime of eighty-six years — is an exceptionally rare occurrence. Anna was not merely a plaything; she was a quiet witness to the rapid modernization of America, traveling from the industrial glove-making capital of Fulton County, New York, to the farmlands of Hector, Schuyler County. Her preservation reflects a profound, lifelong emotional bond between a child and her doll — a bond that endured from infancy through marriage, through decades of adulthood, to the end of a long and meaningful life.

COLLECTOR'S NOTE: The combination of factors making Anna exceptional is rare in the extreme: (1) a 27-inch wax or wax-over doll — an unusually large and fine scale for this construction type; (2) documented lifelong provenance with a named owner, birth and death dates (1875–1961), and full family history including the father's prominence as a Fulton County glove manufacturer; (3) original costume including dotted Swiss lace dress, pantalettes, and black leather boots; (4) an unbroken chain of ownership spanning the doll's entire existence. In the antique doll market, documented personal provenance with a named owner can add 100–150% or more to the value of an otherwise anonymous doll. Market Value reflects realistic shop/private-sale pricing; Estimated Worth reflects what a specialty doll collector, provenance-focused buyer, or museum would pay for a piece with this level of documented history.