



HAWTHORNE

Fine Art

Jane Cooper Sully Darley (1807-1877)

Born in New York in 1807, Jane Cooper Sully (Darley) was the eldest daughter of celebrated American portrait painter Thomas Sully (1783-1872). “Recognized as the finest portrait painter in Philadelphia”,¹ Thomas Sully painted over 2600 paintings in his lifetime. His portrait of his daughter Jane Cooper Sully is in the permanent collection of the Brooklyn Museum and his portrait “Mother and Son” depicting Jane and her son Francis Thomas Sully Darley is in the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

After his brother Lawrence’s death in 1804, Sully supported his brother’s widow Sarah Annis Sully and their three children. In 1806, Sully married Sarah and they had 9 children of their own. The Sullys were a gifted family and several of the children inherited their father’s affinity for art however Jane was “chiefly noted for her lovely pictures of children”.² She learned to paint by copying her father and other artists. Notations made by Sully in his register of portraits beginning around 1825, describe paintings begun by Jane that he would go on to finish or retouch.

In 1833, Jane married William Henry Westray Darley, a prominent Philadelphia musician and brother of renowned American illustrator Felix O.C. Darley. They had one son, Francis T. Sully Darley, a musician who at age 20 became the organist of Christ Church [Philadelphia]. He was a member of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and was influential in starting the Social Art Club, later known as the Rittenhouse Club, and was active in organizing the Penn Club.³

¹ John Caldwell, *American Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Vol. I*, (New York: MMA, 1994)

² “Andrew Jackson Sketched from Life”, *Los Angeles Herald* (Los Angeles, California) Sun, Jan 8, 1905, p. 25

³ “F.T.S. Darley Dies at Shore”, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) Sun, Aug 23, 1914, p.11



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In a letter dated March 11, 1848, Thomas Sully writes, “Jane has lately been called upon to take some portraits. She is always ready to receive an order to paint. I think she paints better than she ever did...”⁴

In her lifetime, Jane exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the Artists Fund Society [Philadelphia], the National Academy of Design, the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore and the Boston Atheneum. In 1838, Jane and Thomas Sully were named honorary professional members of the National Academy of Design.⁵ Four of Jane’s paintings are in the permanent collection of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine arts.

Jane Cooper Sully Darley died in Philadelphia on March 3, 1877.

⁴ Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding, *The Life and Works of Thomas Sully (1783-1872)*, (Philadelphia: Wickersham Press, 1921), p.73

⁵ *Catalogue of the Thirteenth Annual Exhibition at the National Academy of Design*, (New York: E.B. Clayton, 1838), p. 5