



HAWTHORNE

Fine Art

Emma Bailey (Sweeney) Fraser (1881-1957)

Emma Bailey Fraser was born in Newton, Massachusetts in 1881 to Emma A. Sweeney and Morgan J. Sweeney. Fraser's father was an American illustrator considered to be America's first political cartoonist.¹ Sweeney headed the art and engraving department for the Boston Globe and signed his work with the pseudonym "Boz".² He illustrated "Yawcob Strauss and Other Poems," by the American poet Charles Follen Adams (1842-1918) in 1910.³

While little information exists regarding Fraser's education and artistic training she likely honed her skills under her father's tutelage. According to archival sources, Fraser worked as a commercial designer and held a studio in Boston between 1908 and 1918. A census record from 1910 indicates that Fraser worked as a designer for a magazine. Fraser was not alone in her pursuit of a career in the arts. Her younger sister Mary G. Sweeney is also listed on the census as a magazine illustrator.

In 1910, Fraser won 1st prize and was awarded \$75 by the Pilgrim Publicity Association. The association used Fraser's design in an advertising campaign to benefit manufacturers of New England.⁴ In 1912, Fraser married Herbert C. Fraser of New Hampshire. Her husband worked in the leather goods industry. The couple resided in Newton and had two children.

A member of the Copley Society, Fraser exhibited her floral pastels in the Society's gallery in 1937. A.J. Philpott from the Boston Globe noted her delicate rendering of floral textures. He stated, "These are real flowers in all their color brilliancy... There is something of vital interest in every one of these pictures."⁵ The following year Fraser exhibited her work at Vose Galleries in Boston.⁶ In 1939, Fraser exhibited her flower pastels at the Newtonville Library⁷ and at the Newton Public Library.⁸

¹ "Boston and The Globe," The Boston Globe (Boston, Massachusetts), Thu, Jun 4, 1959, Page 12

² "Boston and The Globe," The Boston Globe (Boston, Massachusetts), Fri, Jun 5, 1959, Page 24

³ "New Volume of Old Verses," The Boston Globe (Boston, Massachusetts), Sun, Dec 11, 1910, Page 38

⁴ "Prizes to Boston Artists," The Boston Globe (Boston, Massachusetts), Wed, Apr 13, 1910, Page 16

⁵ "Flower Paintings Are Shown by Emma Fraser," The Boston Globe (Boston, Massachusetts), Sat, Jan 2, 1937, Page 18

⁶ "Newton," The Newton Graphic (Newton, Mass.) Vol. LXVII-No. 12, November 18, 1938, p5

⁷ "Art and Button Exhibit at Newtonville Library," The Newton Graphic (Newton, Mass.) Vol. LXVIII-No. 16, December 15, 1939, p12

⁸ "Newton," The Newton Graphic (Newton, Mass.) Vol. LXVII-No. 24, February 10, 1939, p4



HAWTHORNE Fine Art

In 1940, Fraser was awarded a bronze medal from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society for her collection of flower paintings exhibited at Horticultural Hall.⁹ She received a vote of thanks from the society the following year for her display of flower paintings at the exhibition of the American Iris Society.¹⁰ Her flower and bird paintings were also exhibited in 1941 at Star House on Chestnut Street in Boston.¹¹ Fraser continued actively exhibiting her work through the end of the decade including at the Newton Young Men's Christian Association¹² and at the corner office of the Newton National Bank.¹³

Fraser's work was featured in 1947 at the opening of the Clairhorne Galleries in Newton. Her pastel work included depictions of roses, geraniums, petunias "as well as her famous chickadee paintings."¹⁴ According to the Newton Graphic, Fraser, "has long been recognized as one of the outstanding flower painters of the country, and her work combines a softness of treatment and a fidelity of draftsmanship that combine to make her pictures popular everywhere."¹⁵

Emma Bailey (Sweeney) Fraser died in Newton, Massachusetts on December 19, 1957. She was 76 years old.

⁹ "Newton," The Newton Graphic (Newton, Mass.) Vol. LXVIII-No. 41, June 14, 1940, p4

¹⁰ "Horticultural Hall Displays Rare Irises," The Boston Globe (Boston, Massachusetts), Tue, Jun 3, 1941, Page 13

¹¹ "Newton," The Newton Graphic (Newton, Mass.) Vol. LXX-No. 3, September 25, 1941, p2

¹² "Pastels of Flowers Now on Exhibit," The Newton Graphic (Newton, Mass.), Vol. LXXVL No. 40 October 6, 1949, p6

¹³ "Flower Paintings on Exhibit at National Bank," The Newton Graphic (Newton, Mass.) Vol. LXXVII-No. 6, February 5, 1950, p3

¹⁴ "Clairhorne Galleries Opens at Newton Cor.," The Newton Graphic (Newton, Mass.) Vol. LXXIV-No. 47, December 4, 1947, p7

¹⁵ Ibid