



HAWTHORNE

Fine Art

Mary Cummings Browne Hatch (1861-1939)

Mary Cummings Browne (also Brown) was born in 1861 in Newark, New Jersey to Matilda and Leonard P. Browne, a superintendent of a jewelry manufacturer. Browne was the eldest of four children. Her sister Matilda Browne (1869-1947) was a noted American Impressionist known as the “American Rosa Bonheur” due to her penchant for painting farm scenes and cattle. Matilda, crippled by an accident at the age of eight and unable to play with other children amused herself by watching her neighbor, the artist Thomas Moran (1837-1926) at work. Moran took pity on the child and offered her a pencil and crayon which was the start of her life as an artist.¹ Matilda began painting at the age of twelve and went on to study in Paris in 1889 under Julian DuPre. She further studied under American artists Eleanor (1854-1917) and Kathleen Greator (1851-1942) and Carleton Wiggins (1848-1932). Matilda Browne was the first woman artist member of the Old Lyme, Connecticut art colony.²

While few records exist of Mary C. Browne’s early life it is likely that she too studied under Thomas Moran and his artist wife Mary Nimmo Moran (1842-1899). The Moran’s moved to Newark in 1872 when Mary was 11 and Matilda just a toddler. It is also likely that Mary learned the art of etching alongside Mary Nimmo Moran who began experimenting with etching in 1879 and made her first prints in Newark.³

Mary’s study of chrysanthemums and a companion sketch of Jaquemint roses were published in the *Art Interchange* (1885 and 1886). In 1887, Mary’s floral designs were included in “Little Ones Annual,” a volume of stories and poems for children that also included the work of Frederick Childe Hassam (1859-1935) and other notable artists. That same year, Mary C. Browne and Mary Nimmo Moran contributed etchings to the groundbreaking exhibition titled *The Work of the Women Etchers of America* held at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and later at the Union League Club in New York City. The exhibition was the first of its kind and the etchings were said to be “the work not of amateurs but of experts.”⁴

Around the time of the *Women Etchers* exhibit, Mary married Henry Reynolds Hatch in Newark, New Jersey. The couple later settled in Cleveland, Ohio where Hatch was the director of several banks including First National Bank and the Citizens Savings and Trust Company. The couple had three children and traveled extensively throughout Europe, Egypt, Palestine, Turkey, Greece and Russia.⁵

¹ “Local Library Will Have Exhibit...,” *The Courier-News* (Bridgewater, New Jersey), Wed, Nov 14, 1928, Page 18

² “Biography for Matilda Browne.” Accessed June 24, 2020.

www.askart.com/artist_bio/Matilda_Van_Wyck_Browne/27912/Matilda_Van_Wyck_Browne.aspx.

³ “Contributions to the Loan Exhibitions For the Year 1887.” *Annual Report for the Year ... (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)* 12 (1887): 29-36. Accessed June 25, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/43477943.

⁴ Sarah Burns, John Davis, *American Art to 1900: A Documentary History* (Berkeley, CA: Univ of California Press, 2009) 889.

⁵ Thomas Hatch of Barnstable & some of his descendants by Charles Lathrop Pack, 1857-1937, *The Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New Jersey*, Newark, NJ, 1930, p.161, 166-67, 210.



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Following the death of her husband in 1915, Mary married Mattoon M. Curtis, a professor of philosophy at Western Reserve University and Vice President of the Cleveland School of Art in 1924.

Between 1920 and 1933, Mary exhibited etchings, pottery and textiles in more than five of the annual exhibitions of the work of Cleveland artists and craftsmen organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art. In 1920, she received second prize for a decorated porcelain bowl and third prize for a bedspread. In 1922, she won first prize and received the Penton Medal for Excellence for her lace table runner. In 1924, Mary exhibited several etchings including one titled "A Bit of Old Lyme."

In 1922, Mary gifted her etching titled "The Old Church Graveyard" and several engravings by Georg Pencz (German, c. 1500-1550) to the Cleveland Museum of Art. Mary was likely a member of The Print Club of Cleveland which was established in 1919 and was the first museum-affiliated club. The purpose of the club was to promote the art of printmaking within the community and to acquire prints for the museum.⁶ In 1929 and 1930, Mary is listed under her married name, Mrs. Mattoon Curtis, as an Associate Member of The Lyme Art Association. Her youngest sister Jesse Howard Brown, of Lyme Connecticut is also an Associate member.

In 1935, The Cleveland Museum of Art included Mary's etching "The Old Church Graveyard" in the exhibition *Prints by Cleveland Artists*.

Mary Browne Hatch Curtis died in 1939 in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. She was 77 years old.

⁶ Peters, Lisa. "PRINT CLUBS IN AMERICA." *The Print Collector's Newsletter* 13, no. 3 (1982): 88-91. Accessed June 29, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/44131087.