

*The Origins of a Permanent Collection: An Account of the Early History of the Brooks
Memorial Art Gallery under the Direction Florence McIntyre*

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A Fledging Gallery

The Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, given to the city of Memphis by Mrs. Bessie Vance Brooks, was chartered in 1916. At the encouragement of the prominent New York artist Cecilia Beaux, Mrs. Brooks dedicated the \$100,000 building in memory of her recently deceased husband. She began arrangements with the Memphis Park Commission in 1912, the year of her husband's death, and paid in full in 1916, the year the gallery was completed. Samuel Hamilton Brooks was a wealthy wholesale grocer who had made his home in Memphis before the Civil War. According to Memphis historian Mary P. Scheuner, Mr. Brooks wished to use his fortune to enrich the cultural environment of the city he called home.¹ Although he did not live to see the wish carried out, Bessie was sure to see her husband's philanthropic vision become a reality. The new gallery's purpose was to promote love for the arts among Memphis citizens and to acquaint the public with the "best and newest in art."² The addition of an art museum was seen as an indispensable civic gain, putting Memphis among the ranks of Toledo, Cleveland, Chicago, and, in proportion to its size, New York.³ It would soon be known as the "jewel of Overton Park."⁴

¹ Mary P. Scheuner, History 7960, *The "Jewel Box" of Overton Park: A History of Brooks Memorial Art Gallery*, 1-3 (Perre Magness Collection, Memphis Public Library)

² "Memorial Art Gallery Will Be Opened Soon," Memphis Art Association report dated to May 26th, 1916 (Memphis Art Association Collection, Memphis Public Library).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Mary P. Scheuner, History 7960, *The "Jewel Box" of Overton Park: A History of Brooks Memorial Art Gallery*, 1 (Perre Magness Collection, Memphis Public Library)

At the time of its dedication, the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery operated under the supervision of the Memphis Park Commission. There was no operating funding budgeted to the gallery.⁵ It opened simply as a structure – without a permanent collection, a staff, or an exhibition schedule. The gallery was in need of a parent figure, a group to see to its needs and success. The Memphis Art Association, recently founded by Miss Florence McIntyre as a group of city executives and individuals interested in art, decided to direct their efforts to the Brooks gallery. In June of 1916, the Art Association was chartered as a Brooks Memorial Art Gallery support group and began holding meetings at the gallery. The Art Association essentially adopted the young gallery, keeping it staffed and its interests heard within the Park Commission.⁶ The Park Commission, perhaps unaware of how profitable the decision would prove to be, quickly agreed to name Miss McIntyre the director of the gallery. McIntyre would go on to become a key figure, if not *the* key figure, in the early success of the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery and art enrichment in Memphis.

Florence McIntyre: From Memphis to the East Coast Art Circles

Florence Makin McIntyre was born in 1878 to Peter and Ella Goyer McIntyre. The McIntyres were a prominent Memphis family whose fortune stemmed from her self-made maternal grandfather, Charles Wesley Goyer. Mr. Goyer founded a sugar

⁵ Ibid, 3-4

⁶ Mary P. Scheuner, History 7960, *The "Jewel Box" of Overton Park: A History of Brooks Memorial Art Gallery*, 7-8 (Perre Magness Collection, Memphis Public Library).

and molasses refinery, C. W. Goyer & Co., which her father took over upon his death in 1883. Her grandfather left a deep mark in the Memphis community, as the president of the Union and Planters Bank, a leading member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and a passionate philanthropist who gave the ground for widows' residences Orleans Street and contributed a great amount to the Porter-Leath Orphanage.⁷

The family's means gave Florence the opportunity to study painting in Philadelphia in the studio of Miss A. Marguerita Archambault.⁸ During her time in the city, Miss Archambault exposed McIntyre to the interconnected Philadelphia and New York art social circles, attending lunches at the Cosmopolitan Club,⁹ the Plastic Club,¹⁰ and the Pen and Brush Club.¹¹ It was Miss Archambault who was also responsible for introducing McIntyre to the prolific American Impressionist William Chase, which would result in a life-long friendship and education.

⁷ Florence McIntyre, *Art and Life* (Memphis, Tennessee: S.C. Toof & Company, 1952) 3-4. The Porter-Leath Orphanage was the first refuge for orphans and widows in Shelby County. It was founded in 1850 by Sarah Leath. It is still in operation today serving over 10,000 low-income children and families (<http://www.porterleath.org>).

⁸ Florence McIntyre, *Art and Life* (Memphis, Tennessee: S.C. Toof & Company, 1952) 5.

⁹ The Cosmopolitan Club, founded in 1909, is a private and prestigious New York club in New York City's Upper East Side. It was established as a venue for accomplished women in the arts to gather and socialize (<http://www.cosclub.com/general/viewHome>).

¹⁰ The Plastic Club, founded in 1897, is an art club and gallery devoted to the promotion and preservation of the visual (plastic) arts in Philadelphia (<http://www.plasticclub.org/>).

¹¹ The Pen and Brush Club, founded in 1894, is an organization based in New York City dedicated to women in the visual, literary, and performing arts (<http://www.penandbrush.org/index.html>).

William A. Chase (1849-1916) was born in Williamsburg, Indiana where he studied with artist Benjamin Hayes as a young man. At age twenty, Chase moved to New York City to study with J.O. Eaton at the National Academy of Design. Working in the traditional school of painting, Chase stayed in New York City for a time, opening a studio and exhibiting at the popular Tenth Street Studio. He also achieved fame overseas, working with the well-known artist Anton Kaulbach in Germany. He ultimately returned to settle in New York, working at the newly founded Students' Art League as a one of the most sought out teachers and artists in America.¹² McIntyre's strong ties to Chase would result in a significant foundation network of contacts and artist involvement for the future Brooks Memorial Art Gallery (which will be revisited in greater detail later in the essay).¹³

After McIntyre's time studying with Archambault and Chase in Philadelphia, she spent five consecutive years summering in the artist colony of Woodstock, New York. She passed her days discussing the latest in American art and attending private exhibitions in the company of resident artists and teachers such as the Swedish-American painter John F. Carlson and the popular landscapist Birge Harrison, along with a number of William Chase's pupils. McIntyre recounts, "The John Carlsons were delightful hosts. Mrs. Carlson would pour tea and Mr. Carlson would show his latest work, and then bring out canvas after canvas, and we talked

¹² Florence McIntyre, *Art and Life* (Memphis, Tennessee: S.C. Toof & Company, 1952) 112-122.

¹³ *Ibid*, 6.

of the latest gossip from New York art circles.”¹⁴ It was during her time spent in Woodstock that McIntyre made some of her most noteworthy connections for the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery. She quickly learned the language and lifestyle of the contemporary American art world, and used her mannered charm and genuine passion for the arts to establish long-lasting relationships.¹⁵

1916: The First Four of the Permanent Collection

Returning to Memphis in 1914, McIntyre turned her attention to the development of the fine arts in her home city. In her earliest efforts with the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, McIntyre drew heavily upon her significant connections to establish the gallery’s solid reputation. Even before the gallery opened its doors to the public, McIntyre secured a one-man exhibition of paintings by John F. Carlson in April of 1916. Before arriving in Memphis, the Carlson exhibit was shown at the prestigious Kraushaar Gallery in New York. Swedish-American John F. Carlson was a leading contemporary landscapist who McIntyre knew well from her summers in Woodstock, NY.¹⁶ The exhibition was held by the Memphis Art Association, in association with Memphis Chamber of Commerce, at the Nineteenth Century Club. The Nineteenth Century Club is a non-profit women’s philanthropic organization established in Memphis in 1890.¹⁷ McIntyre was an active member for many years, often directing the club’s interest to the arts, namely the Brooks Memorial Art

¹⁴ Florence McIntyre, *Art and Life* (Memphis, Tennessee: S.C. Toof & Company, 1952) 6.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 7.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 10.

¹⁷ *Commercial Appeal*, July 1st, 2011.

Gallery and the James Lee Memorial Art Academy. Only days after the exhibition, McIntyre accepted the Park Commission's nomination to hold the position of director of the gallery.¹⁸ The following month it was dedicated by Bessie Brooks in the presence of a number of important Memphians, including Reverend Thomas F. Gailor, the bishop of Tennessee, Col. Robert Galloway of the Park Commission, Mrs. Frances C. Church, the President of the Memphis Art Association, and, on behalf of Mayor E. H. Crump, City Attorney C. B. Bryan.¹⁹

Following the opening of the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, the local press praised its purpose and mission to act as a home for art and culture in Memphis. The gallery's stately architecture, designed by James Gamble Rogers²⁰, received regional and national recognition. The first paintings to be hung in the gallery were the Portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel H. Brooks (1911) by Cecilia Beaux, a younger Portrait of Bessie Vance (c. 1890) by Kate Carl, a portrait of Mr. Samuel Brooks (c. 1886) by William Browning Cooper, and a work entitled *Autumn Mists* by John F.

¹⁸ Florence McIntyre, *Art and Life* (Memphis, Tennessee: S.C. Toof & Company, 1952) 10.

¹⁹ Report of Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, Memphis Art Association, no date (Memphis Art Association Collection, Memphis Public Library)

²⁰ James Gamble Rogers was a prominent architect brought to Memphis from New York City to design to the gallery. He is known for designing a number of the buildings at Yale University. Douglas K. S. Hyland, *History of the Collection of the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art*, 12 (Perre Magness Collection, Memphis Public Library).

Carlson. The four portraits were donated by Bessie Brooks, and the Carlson by the Memphis Park Commission.²¹

Beaux's two works were a wonderful foundation to the success of the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery. The popular female artist was a highly regarded portraitist and a close acquaintance of Bessie Brooks. She was an obvious choice for Bessie when she wanted to commission portraits of herself and her husband. Beaux was also a contemporary of the well-connected McIntyre. The two were both students of the traditional school of William Chase and spent time studying with him at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art. Chase honored Beaux with the high compliment of being, in his opinion, the most talented female artist. With Beaux's name, McIntyre was able to attract the attention of many contemporary artists to the Brooks gallery, especially those from New York where Beaux lived and worked at the time. In the months and years that followed, these artists sent works to be exhibited the Brooks, and a number of their works made in to the gallery's permanent collection. Beaux's contribution to the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery also opened to the door to the involvement of other followers and students of William Chase.²²

Kate Carl also added a much-needed dimension to the first works in the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery's collection. In her portrait of Bessie Vance, she depicts the young woman in fashionable riding attire. When she sat for the portrait,

²¹ Florence McIntyre, *Art and Life* (Memphis, Tennessee: S.C. Toof & Company, 1952) 9-11.

²² Memphis Brooks Museum of Art files

the unmarried Bessie had not yet taken Samuel Hamilton Brooks' last name. As a successful painter, Carl had become a substantial source of pride for educated Memphians in the early 20th century. Born and raised in Memphis, she was rising to national, and eventually international, attention as a working artist and teacher.²³ A longtime friend and teacher of Bessie Brooks, Carl was patently involved in the gallery and its growth. She taught Bessie as a young woman and spent a number of months traveling with her through out Europe studying the Old Masters. McIntyre, unsurprisingly, was also well acquainted with Carl. As young female artists growing up in the same privileged class Memphis society as McIntyre, the two knew each other well. McIntyre's exceptional skill to draw upon any and all connections served her well in her relationship with Carl. Carl graciously accepted the position as one of the first jurors for proposed works to the galleries, and reviewed works from her home and studio in New York. Carl was also named an original trustee of the gallery, and served on the board for many years to come.²⁴

McIntyre and Bessie Brooks were sure to establish a professional jury at the time of the Brook's founding. In her contract with Park Commission, Bessie acted on behalf of city of Memphis and stipulated that the first acquisitions committee would consist of Kate Carl, William M. Chase, and Cecilia Beaux. The committee was instructed to examine every picture and statue to determine its worthiness as part

²³ In 1938, Kate Carl went on to achieve her highest level of fame when she traveled across the world the paint the empress dowager of China (Press Scimitar December 9th, 1938).

²⁴ Memphis Brooks Museum of Art files

of the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery's permanent collection.²⁵ The stamp of approval from these three prominent American artists was key to the gallery's success and reputation. Due to the fact that all of the jurors lived and worked in New York, the canvases were shipped for careful review and subsequently either approved or rejected.

Despite the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery's humble beginnings, McIntyre and the jurors established a rigorous judging standard, rejecting paintings even when the gallery only had a handful to its name. In an interview with the *Commercial Appeal*, McIntyre stressed, "I wanted our gallery to have a standing... I took pains to hold a standard."²⁶ One such painting, intended to be one of the original works hung in the gallery, provoked a small controversy between the gallery and the Memphis Park Commission. In April of 1916, the Park Commission purchased *Autumn Mists* at John F. Carlson's one-man show hosted by the Memphis Art Association at the Nineteenth Century Club. The Park Commission intended to give the work to the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery as a gift to hang in the gallery on the day of its dedication. The jurors, however, rejected the work claiming that Carlson had other canvases that would represent him better in the gallery. Carlson eventually painted another work for the gallery that was accessioned in 1924.²⁷

²⁵ Douglas K. S. Hyland, *History of the Collection of the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art*, 12 (Perre Magness Collection, Memphis Public Library)

²⁶ *Commercial Appeal*, August 19th, 1962 (Memphis Public Library).

²⁷ In a letter dated to Sept. 18th, 1922, an unidentified individual writes C. P. J. Mooney, of the Art Department of the Memphis Chamber of Commerce, about the controversy over Carlson's *Autumn Mist*. Specific reasons for its rejection are not

As mentioned previously, John F. Carlson was a successful landscapist who McIntyre knew well from her summers in Woodstock, NY. She frequently visited his home to socialize with the artist and his acquaintances and view his latest work. McIntyre spent a total of five seasons studying in his studio.²⁸ Upon McIntyre's request, Carlson even wrote a detailed letter crediting her talent and leadership.²⁹ His later 1924 addition to the permanent collection would prove to be a valuable one. *Frost Bound*, painted in 1913, was an exceptional example of Carlson's work at the height of his career. Before making its home at the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, it was exhibited in the *Fifth Exhibition Oil Paintings by Contemporary American Artists* at the Corcoran Gallery of Washington, D.C. where, according to the newspapers, President Woodrow Wilson stopped to view it.³⁰ It was also displayed at the *Ninth Annual Exhibition of Selected Paintings by American Artists* at the City Art Museum of St. Louis and won the silver medal at the 1915 *Panama Pacific International Exposition* in San Francisco.³¹

given, but frustration is expressed at the decision. The individual states that he is relieved that Carlson was not too offended to submit another canvas in 1922. The letter is unsigned (Florence McIntyre Collection, Memphis Public Library).

²⁸ Florence McIntyre, *Art and Life* (Memphis, Tennessee: S.C. Toof & Company, 1952) 160-161.

²⁹ Letter from September 14th, 1932 from John F. Carlson (Florence McIntyre Collection, Memphis Public Library).

³⁰ New York Tribune, January 24th, 1915 (p. 11).

³¹ Selected catalogues from the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art's files. In the 1915 Catalogue Deluxe of the Department of Fine Arts from the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco 1915, the painting is listed as *Frost Bound Stream*, but research from the Brooks Museum shows that this is the same work as *Frost Bound* and did win the silver medal at the Exhibition.

William Browning Cooper's painting rounded out the group of 1916 accessions. The portrait is of Mr. Samuel Brooks, Samuel Hamilton Brooks' father.³² Cooper studied at the highly revered Royal Academy of Design in Europe. He later established himself as a painter in Tennessee and the surrounding areas, settling in Memphis in 1846. Like Carl, he added a great sense of pride to patrons of the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery – one of their own Tennesseans hanging among the ranks of the most sought after contemporary American artists. McIntyre used the momentum from gallery's first year to carry the gallery to achieve greater recognition, receive more prestigious exhibitions, and continue to expand their permanent collection.³³

“The First Lady of Art in Memphis”

Between the years of 1916 and 1922, McIntyre worked tirelessly to network for the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, quickly earning the title of the “first lady of art in Memphis.”³⁴ She kept regular and very personal correspondence with Bessie

³² In a letter from May 13th, 1992, the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art Registrar Marilyn Masler explains to other members on staff that recent research has led her to believe that the Cooper portrait of Samuel Brooks was painted as a copy of a miniature that had already been in possession of the family. Further research uncovered that the family was still in possession of the original miniature, painted in 1830, and the Brooks Museum had one of two copies painted by Cooper in 1885. Sadly, the Brooks Museum could no longer claim to have the earliest known work by Cooper (Memphis Brooks Museum of Art files).

³³ Memphis Brooks Museum of Art files

³⁴ The Florence McIntyre Collection at the Memphis Public Library includes an impressive collection of over fifty letters of correspondence between McIntyre and many New York and Philadelphia based artists who she knew from her time spent in both cities. While the content of most of the letters is fairly personal and therefore

Brooks, Beaux, Chase, and Carl, as well as constant exchanges with artist with whom she was interested in representing at the Brooks. She took responsibility over almost all correspondences, insurance agreements, gift records, shipping arrangements, and exhibition negotiations.³⁵ From her connections established during her time in Philadelphia, New York City, and Woodstock, McIntyre stayed in touch with leading contemporary artists such as John Singer Sargent, Thorton Oakley, and Edward E. Redfield. In her 1952 autobiography entitled *Art and Life* she includes biographies of all the noteworthy American artists of her time, many of which she knew personally. In order to profit from the advice of more reputable art museums and galleries, she frequently communicated with establishments all over the country, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Gallery, the National Academy of Design, the Chicago Institute of Art, The St. Louis Art Museum, and high profile galleries in New York City.³⁶

From these institutions, McIntyre often requested exhibitions that would encourage the growth of the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery. After hearing of the young gallery in Memphis, Edward Robinson of the Metropolitan Museum of Art put McIntyre in touch with the American Federation of Arts' Mr. Allen Eaton. Mr. Eaton

not directly related to this essay, the number of letters alone proves McIntyre's networking ability as an invaluable asset to the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery.

³⁵ The Florence McIntyre Collection at the Memphis Public Library includes multiple files devoted to McIntyre's letters to and from artists including William Chase, Daniel Chester French, Birge Harrison, Childe Hassam, Robert Spencer, Irving, R. Wiles, and John Carlson. Other files are devoted to insurance agreements, records, etc.

³⁶ Florence McIntyre, *Art and Life* (Memphis, Tennessee: S.C. Toof & Company, 1952).

worked as the Federation's field secretary of "mission work" to help secure exhibits and growth for cities less established in the arts. He wrote back and fourth with McIntyre and eagerly agreed to lobby to have a number of top American exhibits sent to the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery. He, Robinson, and McIntyre corresponded frequently, discussing possible shows to be sent to Memphis.³⁷

1921 was an exciting year for the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery and the arts in Memphis as a whole. McIntyre, with the Memphis Art Association behind her, approached the Memphis Park Commission and the Memphis Chamber of Commerce with a proposal to set aside more funds for the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery.³⁸ Due to the overwhelming attendance since its opening and McIntyre's continued networking efforts, the Park Commission agreed to allot the gallery \$3,000 per year for operating expenses and exhibitions.³⁹ The Park Commission also established an organization specifically for the art gallery, "as it was customary for galleries to have its own officers and board of trustees."⁴⁰ This marked the establishment of the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery's first board.

³⁷ In a letter from September 10th, 1919, Edward Robinson states that he has included a list of possible shows to be sent to Memphis. The list itself has been lost and is not included in McIntyre's Collection (Florence McIntyre Collection, Memphis Public Library).

³⁸ "Brooks Memorial Art Gallery and its relation to the Memphis Art Assn.," undated document from the Memphis Park Commission (Florence McIntyre Collection, Memphis Public Library)

³⁹ Mary P. Scheuner, History 7960, *The "Jewel Box" of Overton Park: A History of Brooks Memorial Art Gallery*, 8 (Perre Magness Collection, Memphis Public Library).

⁴⁰ "Brooks Memorial Art Gallery and its relation to the Memphis Art Assn.," undated document from the Memphis Park Commission (Florence McIntyre Collection, Memphis Public Library).

In February, McIntyre traveled with artists Birge Harrison and Alfred Hutton to Charleston, South Carolina for the All Southern Art Exhibition. There, they met with representatives and selected a committee to found the Southern States Art League. The purpose of the League was to raise the standard of art education throughout the South. McIntyre was appointed chairman of the League. In the same month, McIntyre made arrangements for an exhibition loaned by Mrs. Chase, in memory of her husband (Mr. William Merritt Chase) who died in 1919. The show consisted of an extensive collection of antique rings owned by the artist. As an associate member of the National Association of Women, McIntyre was also able to secure a loan of Mary Cassatt's well-known work entitled *Caress Infantine*, along with a full exhibition of works from other members of the Association. Later in the year, the gallery showed a group of paintings by popular American artists, including Robert Spencer, Edward R. Redfield, Childe Hassam, Birge Harrison, and Irving R. Wiles. This exhibition would soon lead to the accession of a number of works into the gallery's permanent collection.⁴¹

Chase's long-lasting influence on the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery continued on even beyond his death in 1919, as his contemporaries and fellow artists continued in their involvement. Soon after the artist passed away, painter Irving R. Wiles graciously took over Chase's position as a juror for the gallery. Wiles, born in 1861, was a student of Chase who went on to achieve a successful painting career

⁴¹ Florence McIntyre, *Art and Life* (Memphis, Tennessee: S.C. Toof & Company, 1952) 15.

and teach at the art summer school in Peconis, Long Island⁴². While Kate Carl's signature began to show up less frequently on accession approval cards, Wiles and Cecilia Beaux stayed active in accession approvals for years to come.⁴³

The 1922 Acquisitions

1922 brought a powerful new wave of over fifteen works into the gallery's scant four-work permanent collection.⁴⁴ The 1922 accessions are a prime example of McIntyre's skill in bringing profitable exhibitions that would attract Memphians to the view the gallery and often times purchase works. The first was the stately *Self Portrait* (1916) by William Chase that McIntyre secured as a gift from the Memphis Art Association after a brief controversy between members.⁴⁵ The portrait was seen and purchased at the "Memorial Exhibition of Paintings" by William M. Chase that came to the Brooks in April of 1919 after the exhibition closed at the Metropolitan

⁴² Memphians and the Rhodes College Community may recognize his name from the well-known portrait of Southwestern's former president Charles Diehl. Florence McIntyre, *Art and Life* (Memphis, Tennessee: S.C. Toof & Company, 1952) 135-136.

⁴³ No specific reason is evident for Kate Carl's absence in accession approval. Most likely, her international travels kept her from participating as frequently (Memphis Brooks Museum of Art files).

⁴⁴ Accession numbers indicate that there were at least sixteen works accessioned in 1922.

⁴⁵ In a letter to Cecilia Beaux on June 30th, 1919, McIntyre relays her concern about a prominent male member who disapproves of Chase and his work. There was a split in the American art world about between traditional Chase followers and Henri McIntyre, believing it to be a very fine portrait, asks Beaux's opinion. Beaux's letter of response is undocumented, but her agreement is assumed as she decided to approve the painting accession (Florence McIntyre Collection, Memphis Public Library).

Museum of Art.⁴⁶ The portrait stands in memory of the artist, who was a lifetime supporter and proponent of the Brooks Memorial Gallery.

In addition, the Art Association also gifted a work by Robert Spencer entitled *The Courtyard* (ca. 1916). The painting was seen and purchased by the Memphis Art Association at an exhibition at the Brooks that year. Spencer, another student of William Chase, was a prominent American landscapist. Through consistent correspondence McIntyre eventually convinced the artist, who was known to be uninterested in exhibiting, to send the gallery an impressive one-man show. She was first introduced to Spencer during her time spent in Pennsylvania. McIntyre developed a close relationship with the artist and his wife and even spent time with them at their home at the New Hope (Pennsylvania) artists' colony.⁴⁷ In years to come, Spencer continued to correspond with McIntyre, writing of his happiness in the gallery's success.

The Memphis Park Commission, not to be deterred by their first rejected gift in 1916, gave the Brooks Memorial Art Galley an Edward Redfield landscape entitled *Frozen Stream* (1920). Redfield first exhibited in Memphis at the Nineteenth Century Club in the fall of 1914, alongside of John Fabian Carlson, Birge Harrison, and Albert Pinkham Ryder.⁴⁸ In the spring of 1921, McIntyre made arrangements for an exhibition of paintings featuring Redfield, Spencer, and Wiles (among others)

⁴⁶ In the price listing from the 1919 exhibition, Chase's Self Portrait is listed with a price of \$3,000 (Memphis Brooks Museum of Art files).

⁴⁷ Florence McIntyre, *Art and Life* (Memphis, Tennessee: S.C. Toof & Company, 1952) 155.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 9.

to come to gallery, at which time the Park Commission purchased the canvas.⁴⁹

Edward Redfield, born in 1869, lived and worked in the same artists circles as McIntyre, Beaux, and Spencer. He studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and, like Spencer, settled at the New Hope (Pennsylvania) artist colony.⁵⁰ He knew McIntyre well, and the two kept a long-time correspondence.

Alongside the support of the city, a number of the 1922 accessions were gifted by private donors, the first being Birge Harrison's *Morning After Snow* (ca. 1900) from the James Lee family. Records indicate that at the same exhibition that Redfield's *Frozen Stream* was purchased, James Lee's daughter Rosa Lee saw and purchased the work.⁵¹ The James Lee family was a very wealthy Memphis family that McIntyre and her father knew well. James Lee was a Memphis riverboat tycoon in the 1860's.⁵² As a result of McIntyre's assiduous work within Memphis Art Association, his Victorian mansion on Orleans Street would soon become the home of the first free art school in Memphis, the James Lee Memorial Art Academy.⁵³

Birge Harrison's involvement with the Brooks and the Memphis Art Association stemmed from his long-standing relationship with McIntyre. Harrison (1855-1929) was a Philadelphia native of a distinguished family. In his later years, he lived and worked in Woodstock, founding the artist colony where McIntyre spent

⁴⁹ Ibid, 15.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 156.

⁵¹ A certificate from the Memphis Brooks files cites "Rosa Lee and family" as the donor.

⁵² *Commercial Appeal*, April 3rd, 2011.

⁵³ Florence McIntyre, *Art and Life* (Memphis, Tennessee: S.C. Toof & Company, 1952) 17.

five consecutive summers. He split his time between working in his studio and teaching the school of landscape painting.⁵⁴ In a very successful attempt to campaign for membership for the gallery, the Memphis Art Association held a one-man show of paintings by Harrison in 1916. Interest was so high that the executive board of the Association voted to set aside part its funds to begin its own permanent collection. A business record states that they purchased *Early Candle Light* and thus began a permanent collection for the Association, which, until this point, had used its dues to bring exhibitions to the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery. The Association members called this motion the “buy a picture fund.”⁵⁵ After the purchase, *Early Candle Light* was loaned to the gallery, but records show that it did not enter the permanent collection for a number of years, only to be de-accessioned soon after.⁵⁶ Harrison showed at the Brooks again in the 1921 painting exhibition with Redfield, Spencer, and Wiles, this time attracting the attention of Rosa Lee and the purchase of *Morning After Snow* that soon entered the gallery’s collection.

That same year the Moons, a prominent Memphis family, gave the Brooks a portrait of Robert Nelson Moon (c. 1858) painted by John O’Brien Inman.⁵⁷ The members of the Moon family are among the first documented residents of Memphis. The most famous in the family are the Moon sisters who loyally served the South as

⁵⁴ Ibid, 125-126.

⁵⁵ Memphis Art Association Business Record from 1916 (Florence McIntyre Collection, Memphis Public Library).

⁵⁶ Memphis Brooks Museum of Art files

⁵⁷ The Memphis Brooks Museum of Art’s files previously named the artist as Joseph O’Brien Inman. It has recently been discovered that the artist’s correct name is John O’Brien Inman. The Brooks Museum has since updated its records.

confederate spies. The sisters gifted the miniature portrait of their father after their return to Memphis following the Civil War.⁵⁸ Robert Nelson's very young age at the time of the portrait has helped to accurately date the miniature. John O'Brien Inman was only working in Memphis between the years of 1856 to 1859 before leaving to serve in the war, so the portrait must have been completed before he departed. Robert Nelson, born in 1856, was around two years old when he sat for the portrait, dating the painting to approximately 1858.⁵⁹

Like many other artists represented in the early collection of the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, John O'Brien Inman hailed from New York. Born in 1828, Inman grew up in the art circles of New York City studying under his father, the well-known painter Henry Inman. He followed largely in his father's footsteps, becoming a successful figure and still life painter. His painting career took him across the country to the West Coast and eventually to the mid South where he painted Mr. Moon. He continued his travels across the Atlantic to Europe, studying in Paris and Rome. After twelve years abroad Inman returned to New York City, receiving a great deal of recognition and showing his work prominently in the city until his death in 1896.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ "Fabulous Moon Sisters—Spy Exploits Recalled," *Commercial Appeal*, October 10th, 1954 (Memphis Brooks Museum of Art files).

⁵⁹ Memphis Brooks Museum of Art files

⁶⁰ E. Merton Coulter, "Wanderings of a Painting: The Alonzo Church Portrait," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (June, 1946), pp. 118-124 [<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40577016>].

Unsolved Mysteries

Apart from those aforementioned 1922 acquisitions, there are three additional known (yet fairly unknown in terms of provenance and significance) works from the 1922 accessions – George Healy's *Elizabeth Bankhead Barrett*, Guido Reni's *Baptism of Christ*, and a portrait of a woman.

There is little concrete knowledge of Healy's portrait of Ms. Barrett (1845), only that the work was a gift of the Dilettantes, an amateur Memphis group that supported the arts. There is no record of the group in the Memphis Public Library or Memphis Brooks Museum files. George Healy (1813-1894) was successful American portraitist from Boston, MA. He studied in Paris under the well-known Thomas Couture.⁶¹ Healy's portrait of Elizabeth Bankhead Healy is a wonderful example of the artist's work and is listed in the National Portrait Gallery's catalogue of American Portraiture.⁶²

The history of Guido Reni's *Baptism of Christ* is very unclear in the files of both the Memphis Art Association Collection and the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art. Its significance as the first piece of Italian art, or any non-American art, gifted to the gallery is completely undocumented. It is listed as a gift presented by Mr. Albert S. Caldwell in January of 1922, but rejected by the New York jurors in January of 1922. A loan receipt from December 15th, 1955 that states that the painting was

⁶¹ Britannica Online Encyclopedia,
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/258238/George-Healy>.

⁶² National Portrait Gallery (The Smithsonian Institute),
http://collections.si.edu/search/results.jsp?q=record_ID:npg_22.M.8.

received by the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery. The board of trustees voted to de-accession the work on March 2nd, 1983.⁶³

The unknown portrait of a woman has no date, title, artist, or donor listed in its accession file at the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art. The file includes nothing but a small scrap of paper on which a note is jotted that the portrait could possibly be the mother of the Maud Mason. Maud Mason was a popular regional artist and long-time supporter of the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery who left a portrait of her mother, along with a number of other works, to the Brooks in her will in 1956. Her mother's portrait was accessioned in 1957, ruling out the possibility of its inclusion in the 1922 acquisitions.⁶⁴

An Abrupt and Ambiguous End

In June of 1922, Miss Florence McIntyre abruptly resigned from her duties as director at the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery. She devotes only one short sentence in her detailed autobiography to the event.⁶⁵ From the few records that remain, it seems the Memphis Park Commission pressed the resignation upon McIntyre due to a political upset. The controversy began with the death of Robert Galloway, the first chairman of the Memphis Park Commission, who took a leading role in finalizing the location of the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery. Mrs. Galloway enlisted McIntyre help to have a \$50,000 memorial erected in his name. The two women chose the sculptor

⁶³ Brooks Memorial Art Gallery Acquisition Record Sheet, Memphis Brooks Museum of Art files.

⁶⁴ Memphis Brooks Museum of Art files.

⁶⁵ Florence McIntyre, *Art and Life* (Memphis, Tennessee: S.C. Toof & Company, 1952) 17.

Daniel Chester French to design the memorial. The location was set on the parkway but another prominent Memphis citizen, for reasons unknown, was steadfast in his opposition to have the memorial erected across from his home. The incident caused Abe Goodman, chairman of the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery and member of the Park Commission, as well as a close friend of McIntyre, to be replaced. Her resignation followed immediately.⁶⁶

While no primary statements from McIntyre remain in her collection, letters from personal friends and acquaintances from other art institutions suggest outrage and confusion towards the manner in which McIntyre's resignation was handled.

One particularly disconcerted woman, Mrs. J. E. Thomas, wrote to McIntyre:

In the *Commercial Appeal* I read that you had resigned your position at the Art Gallery 'after the existence of a condition under which it was intimated to you that your resignation would be acceptable.' Surely there is a terrible mistake somewhere for I know you would not fall short of your duty... I can't tell you how much I do hope that the wrong which has been done to you will be righted and you will be persuaded to withdraw your resignation.⁶⁷

Another friend, Ellen P. Ware stated her anger that McIntyre was wrongly resolved of her duties. She held that the accusations against McIntyre were false, claiming that her friends would not stand for such an unwarranted act by other "envious" individuals.⁶⁸ Curator Blake Godwin, of the Toledo Museum of Art, wrote to McIntyre expressing his regret that his institute did not have an open position to

⁶⁶ Perre Magness, "Florence McIntyre led city art drive," *Past Times*, August 15th, 1991 (Memphis Brooks Museum of Art Library files).

⁶⁷ Letter from June 15th, 1922 from Mrs. J. E. Thomas to McIntyre (Florence McIntyre Collection, Memphis Public Library)

⁶⁸ Letter from June 9th, 1922 from Ms. Ellen P. Ware to McIntyre (Florence McIntyre Collection, Memphis Public Library)

offer her because he was aware of what a fine asset she would be to any museum. He goes on to suggest that she contact the Chicago Institute of Art for any opportunities, and reassured her that with her talents, she should not have difficulties in finding the right place to employ them.⁶⁹

A Long Standing Impact

Following the upset, McIntyre wasted no time in turning her efforts and the efforts of the Memphis Art Association toward art education in Memphis. They opened the first Free Art School of Memphis, holding classes at the Nineteenth Century Club.⁷⁰ Miss Rosa Lee, chairman of the art department of the Association, dedicated her family's Victorian home on Adams Street to the school, and the James Lee Memorial Art Academy was established with McIntyre as director. The Academy, predecessor to the Memphis College of Art, flourished for years.⁷¹ There is no doubt that the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery missed McIntyre's presence in the following years. In her short time, she was responsible for two major groups of acquisitions, amounting to approximately twenty to twenty-five paintings from

⁶⁹ Letter from July 22nd, 1922 from Blake More Godwin of the Toledo Museum of Art to McIntyre (Florence McIntyre Collection, Memphis Public Library)

⁷⁰ Perre Magness, "Florence McIntyre Led City Art Drive," *Past Times*, August 15th 1991 (Library, Memphis Brooks Museum of Art).

⁷¹ Florence McIntyre, *Art and Life* (Memphis, Tennessee: S.C. Toof & Company, 1952) 17.

highly-regarded American artists.⁷² In the following ten years, the Brooks files only show eight additional accessioned works.⁷³

It is undeniable that Miss Florence McIntyre left a permanent mark of the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, but to take it a step further, I am compelled to propose that she was the essential factor in the gallery's survival and success. It is hard, perhaps even frightening, to imagine what would have become of an unstaffed and unbudgeted empty establishment without her close acquaintances with prominent artists, unremitting networking to other institutions, and steadfast directorship. The works acquired under her leadership put the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery on the American art map to later acquire extremely significant collections, such as the McCall and Kress Collections,⁷⁴ and are still some of the most beloved and regarded in the museum's permanent collection.

Today, the Brooks museum has on display five of the twenty-plus works accessioned under McIntyre's directorship. This is an extremely impressive proportion considering the three percent of its collection that the Brooks is able to display at a given time. Beaux's two portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Brooks sit in the newly opened (and highly anticipated) Impressionist Revolution exhibition, along with

⁷² In regards to the number of works accessioned under McIntyre's directorship, it is hard to give an exact amount because early de-accessioned files have since been removed from the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art's files.

⁷³ Memphis Brooks Museum of Art files. See index.

⁷⁴ For more information on the McCall and Kress Collections, please see "The Controversy of the McCall: A Look into Art and Politics of 1940s Memphis" by Amy Aughinbaugh and "The Small and Large of it: the Struggles of The Memphis Brooks Museum of Art and the Kress Collection" by Hannah Gysin.

Kate Carl's *Portrait of Bessie Vance* and Birge Harrison's *Morning After Snow*. Also represented in this exhibition are a number of artists that McIntyre corresponded with during her time at the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery; the most noteworthy include John Singer Sargent, Childe Hassam, and Kate Clark.⁷⁵ In the American Gallery, William Merritt Chase's *Self Portrait* hangs alongside eleven paintings by Carl Gutherz⁷⁶, a Swedish-born artist of international note and a close acquaintance of McIntyre. Memphis is truly indebted to Florence McIntyre for her superior networking ability and unwillingness to settle for anything but the highest standard in art. In an article published after McIntyre's death in 1963, the *Commercial Appeal* eloquently summarized her efforts – "Much that stands here today in that field [art] can be traced to her unstinting effort. Memphis owes more to her, perhaps, than it will ever know."⁷⁷ Certainly it is these ceaseless efforts that established the groundwork for the gallery to become what it is today – one of the leading regional art museums in the mid-South.

⁷⁵ Memphis Brooks Museum of Art files.

⁷⁶ In 1906, Carl Gutherz (1844-1907) was commissioned to draft the first design of what would eventually become the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery. His preliminary sketches include a series of pavilions dedicated to the arts, sciences, and humanities in Overton Park (*Collection Highs from the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art*, 2004). The Brooks extensive collection of Gutherz work was given to the Museum by the artist's son, Marshall Goodheart, in 1968 and 1986 (http://www.artknowledgenews.com/Carl_Gutherz.html).

⁷⁷ *Commercial Appeal*, May 16th, 1963 (Memphis Public Library).