

Maude Louise Miller's Lilacs

by Lynne Belluscio

A couple of years ago I pulled a beautiful floral painting of lilacs out of storage and decided it would be a great addition to the front parlor ... a nice touch of spring. The inventory mentioned that it was painted by Maude Miller "-92" and had been donated to the Historical Society by "her cousins". Somewhere it was mentioned that Maude was an Ingham student, so I wanted to include her beautiful painting in the exhibit this year, but I couldn't find out much about the talented artist. A small card indicated that she was born in 1871 and died in 1910.

The Miller clipping file didn't produce much and I wondered if she had married and would not have been filed with the Miller clippings. The Miller genealogical files were unproductive. I did find a note in the listing of people buried in Genesee County and discovered that Maude Miller, born January 5, 1871, who died on December 4, 1910 was buried in Stafford. I was able to confirm

that Maude Louise Miller attended Ingham in 1878- 1882 and from 1887 until it closed in 1892. She would have been only eight when she began her studies in the Preparatory Department.

Frustrated by the lack of information about Maude, I went up to the archives and began paging through the 1910 *Gazette*, and found on December 7, her obituary. "Miss Maude L. Miller passed away at her home on Church Street - the end came as peacefully as a child falls asleep ..." A quick search through the LeRoy 1907 listing, indicated that she lived at 19 Church Street - the home of Dr. Lee Skinner. This makes sense since her sister, Jessie, was the wife of Lee Skinner.

Jessie also attended Ingham in 1890. Maude was the eldest daughter of Augustus E. Miller (who died in 1892) and Louise Burden Miller. Maude was an active member of St. Mark's Church and the Sanctuary Chapter, the Women's Auxiliary, the Bible class and had taught Sunday

school for many years. She was a member of the Women's Club and the History of Art Club. Her obituary mentions that "In her social life Miss Miller was interested in literary organizations and especially art. She early developed a taste for the latter and she took this course at Ingham University and would have graduated in the same had the school not closed until one year later. There are now many paintings and other work of art in her home which bear witness that her life was not of idleness by rather that of industry."

She was "especially fond of nature" and "loved the country and found much delight in daily walks, noting many of nature's beauties which often escape the eye of the ordinary beholder."

She certainly was a most talented artist and the Historical Society it most glad to have this one painting by her for exhibition. The Ingham photo files have no images of Maude, but I checked the family photos and discovered a delightful image of a little girl with high button shoes, sitting on a velvet chair and two small



photos of a bespeckled Maude with a fashionable hat perched high on her head.

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