

HOOSIER WOMEN AT WORK

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A Mother, Two Sisters, and the Other Lucina: A Story of Important Women in the Muncie Arts Community

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The arts must exist side by side with the coarser plants of daily necessity. ~Washington Irving

Muncie is a city with a rich history rooted in industry and blue collar work, but it also has a sadly overlooked history connected to the arts. So this quote about art existing with daily necessity is really fitting. From the beginning, the arts in Muncie have truly existed side by side with factories. This is an opportunity to highlight some of the amazing women who were pioneers in and advocates for the arts in the Muncie story.

The name “Muncie” itself has a history—Native Americans lived in several villages near the horseshoe bend in the White River. Maybe you’ve heard the tale of a Chief Munsee, but there is no evidence that this mythological chief ever existed.

When natural gas was discovered in the area in 1886, the industrial-based Muncie was born. In an 1895 newspaper article, the Gas Boom was described: “This mighty spirit of light, heat, and power comes as the most wonderful of the gifts to man from the vast storehouse of Nature. . . . Its magic, like a fairy’s wand, has transformed Muncie.” And it was during the Gas Boom that Muncie acquired the nickname “Magic City.” In that same 1895 newspaper article, the city’s growth was detailed: “. . . a great manufacturing center, from which rises daily the hum and bustle of over 50 factories supporting 6,000 workers and an annual output of \$12 million.”

In conjunction with the Gas Boom of the late 1800’s, Muncie was a booming, active center for the arts: There were two opera houses in Muncie during this time and Frederick Douglass, James Whitcomb Riley, and other nationally recognized entertainers put on shows. John Philip Sousa’s band played at Muncie High School. Vaudeville acts performed at the Country Club. And later Theodore Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt, Liberace, and Abbott and Costello visited Muncie.

Maybe you've heard of Ball canning jars? During the Gas Boom, the Ball Brothers built their glass factory in Muncie, forever changing the city's history with investments in what would become Ball State University, Ball Memorial Hospital, the University Art Museum, and thirty years ago the Minnetrista Cultural Center.

Muncie hosted five of the biggest roller skate manufacturers in the country—making 50,000 pairs per year. And the city was cranking out bicycles, too. During World War I, a Muncie company made all of the barbed wire used by troops in the trenches. And people familiar with Muncie's story will remember the big automobile-related factories of Delco Remy, Westinghouse, Chevrolet, and Borg Warner.

Maybe you've seen the movie "Hoosiers?" That movie is based on the 1954 high school basketball tournament won by the tiny school of Milan. Unfortunately, the losing team in real life was Muncie Central High School. And last fall was the 40th anniversary of the movie "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," which takes place in Muncie. The reality show "Armed and Famous" starring Jack Osbourne, Eric Estrada, and Latoya Jackson took place in Muncie. And the TV show "Parks and Rec" takes place in fictional Pawnee, Indiana, but the map of Pawnee is an upside down map of Muncie.

Maybe you've heard of *Garfield* cartoonist Jim Davis' connection to Muncie? But did you also know that artist Bob Ross filmed "The Joy of Painting" in Muncie from 1984 through the 1990's?

But the goal of this article is to highlight the Muncie arts scene—specifically the important role women played in the development of a strong appreciation of the arts in the community. And most of these women knew each other, traveled in the same social circles, and advocated for the arts together through exhibits, clubs, and numerous social activities. And there is definitely an overlap with the women in the Muncie arts story, but this paper will focus on three families: The Ryans, the Balls, and the Goodlanders. Each family is involved with the arts in unique ways with unique art.

First, an explanation of the private and public sphere of the artist movement in Muncie, Indiana: This feminist theory defines two different aspects of daily life for women during this time period. The private sphere represents the domestic private unpaid work these women did to better their community and their family lives.

This private sphere was considered the "proper" place for women for many generations. Many times the arts of the private sphere included quilting, sewing arts, home decor, and painting. On the other hand, some women during this time period were able to transcend the concept of the private sphere and became members of the public sphere. Many times, these women in the public sphere were creating a safe space for other women in the workplace by owning their own businesses and participating in labor organizations. Many of these women were able to take these arts of the private sphere and showcase them in the public sphere through exhibits, businesses, and social gatherings.

The Goodlander Sisters were a prime example of women who were afforded the opportunity to participate in the public sphere. They were renowned photographers in the Muncie area and throughout America, photographing many of the other women connected to the arts in Muncie.

Although photography was an acceptable profession for women during this time period, it was still a novelty. There are many newspaper articles from national newspapers including the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Buffalo Sunday Morning News* discussing the rise of women as photographers, as well

as the formation of the Women's Federation of Photographers of America. This is the world of photography during the time that the Goodlander sisters become photographers in Muncie, Indiana. The Goodlander sisters' father, Marquis, became a prominent photographer in Muncie during the 1870's and founded the shop the sisters would eventually own.

The Goodlander sisters, Maude and Maybelle, began their journey into photography working with their father at his studio by assisting with developing negatives, hand-coloring photographs, and helping with customers. The sisters adopted a more central role in the business when Maude joined her father in business in 1899 and younger sister Maybelle became a member of the business a few years later. Marquis retired in the 1910's, and his daughters took over his business.

The Goodlander sisters followed in their father's footsteps and focused on portrait photography. Portrait photography was the customary business of photographers during this time, and the Goodlander Sisters were no exception. They photographed prominent members of society, including the Ball family—William C. Ball, Helen Ball, Lucius Lorenzo Ball, and George Alexander Ball.

The Goodlander Sisters were artistically talented in multiple mediums. Two of the best examples of this include an oil painting the Goodlander sisters completed of William C. Ball that includes various intricate details—the most notable of these being the Masonic emblem on his vest. The sisters also created a very detailed woodcut of the Ball Brothers Manufacturing Company facilities. This woodcut was used as the Ball Brothers letterhead for many years and shows an intricate layout of the manufacturing compound.

Due to their foothold in Muncie, the Goodlander sisters were lauded locally in the *Muncie Star*, which declared: "Misses Maude and Maybelle Goodlander . . . show great ability with the Kodak. Miss Maybelle recently illustrated an article written for the *Indiana Woman* [magazine], and her pictures were considered very fine. It is pleasing to know of having such very young lady artists in our city."

During their time as portrait photographers, the Goodlanders were also recognized on the national scene. One of their photographs was featured on the cover of *American Photography* in November 1914. And in 1929, a photograph of William Jennings Bryan, made at his request by the Goodlanders, was included in his memoirs and used as the inspiration for his oil painting hanging in the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D. C.

The Goodlander Sisters were just a handful of women who were highlighted on the cover of *American Photography* magazine. The sisters were also featured in various exhibits around the world, including ones held in London (the Royal Photographic Society of England) and also curated an exhibit in Muncie of photographers from Germany, England, Russia, Mexico, and Canada.

The story of the Goodlander Sisters is also one of the expansion and growth of Muncie itself. Their studio moved around Muncie and included locations on Mulberry Street, Main Street, and South Walnut Street. Their continuing efforts in promoting photography continued well into their later years. In 1959, the Goodlanders helped form the Professional Photographers of Muncie to encourage the occupation. The sisters continued in their business until their deaths in 1959 and 1962.

Before we get to the Ryans and the rest of the women: There is one *man* who is connected to all of the women in Muncie art scene. From 1876 to 1880, John Ottis Adams had an art studio in downtown Muncie. Adams worked as a portrait painter during this time. After studying in Germany,

Adams returned to Muncie in 1887 to teach classes. In 1889, Adams and William Forsyth formed the Muncie Art School. The school closed in 1891. Adams also taught in Fort Wayne and became the chief instructor at the John Herron Art Institute in Indianapolis in 1902. Adams and Forsyth belong to a famous group of artists called "the Hoosier Group," along with T.C. Steele and others known for their midwestern landscapes.

An early student of J. Ottis Adams was a young woman named Susan Ryan. The Ryan family was a prominent family in Muncie at the turn of the 20th century. The Ball State University Libraries Archives and Special Collections in Bracken Library houses the Ryan family collection of letters, photographs, and other documents. But one of the most important artifacts for learning about the family's avid interest in the arts is the personal diary of Susan Ryan's younger brother, Thomas.

Thomas began keeping a daily record at the age of 14 in 1886 when the Ryan family lived at 603 East Jackson Street. In his diary, Thomas details being encouraged to read books, draw architecture and plans, participate in the boys' choir, practice woodworking, attend lectures and shows, and play and listen to music. And he records his purchases of paper and drawing books. Thomas and his brother and two sisters were all very engaged in art and music.

Most of the Ryan family's interest in the arts and cultural participation was encouraged by Thomas' mother, Lida Ryan. Born in 1841, Lida Jenkins Ryan moved to Muncie in 1865 with her husband John and young daughter, Susan. Lida's mother died when she was 3, so she was raised mostly by her grandparents in a strict household with only one small, secret book and no music. But in the winters, Lida attended school and could read and write quite well by the age of 8. In fact, she was a self-taught, multifaceted artist, writer, and musician.

John W. Ryan, Lida's husband, wrote a memoir of her life, detailing his wife's passion for literature, music, and art. He chronicled her introduction to music as a child: Lida spotted a classmate's guitar, and it was the first musical instrument she had ever seen. So she saved money to buy one of her own and taught herself how to play it.

Music was not only a beautiful and fascinating accomplishment, but it was an element of her soul. Far and near she organized and taught classes, which afforded her great pleasure and enabled her to promote the pleasure of others.

In 1861, Lida quit teaching to attend Muncie High School, where she studied math, astronomy, botany, and Latin. She married John Ryan in 1863 and continued to teach music and art classes in their home and studio. John and Lida built a custom home that still stands today at 208 South Monroe Street in Muncie.

John and Lida had six children, but two of the infants did not survive. In the memoir, John described Lida's heartbreak. Lida's talent as a writer is evident in a poem she wrote to her daughter Mildred on her first birthday in 1869. The beautiful poem reflects her loss and renewed joy:

Hail ethereal sprite formed of Heaven's holy light
How came'st thou loitering here?
Did some angel say as ye wandered this way,
Thou'st needed on this sad sphere?

For years I had lain the victim of pain
 Hope had grown to be naught but a name
 But when I saw thy infant eye and heard thy soft low cry
 A new impulse to live o'er me came.

Today it's one year since thou wert here
 And like a rosebud the surprises unfold
 May fortune and fame in Jesus' sweet name
 In the future bring thee happiness untold.

But we learn the most about the Ryan family's interest in art from Thomas' diary. In fact, Thomas writes about some family artistic or musical activity nearly every day. And Lida had an art studio where she worked and taught art and music in the Ryan home, so Thomas kept track of her students in his diary.

February 13, 1888: After supper Mama and I went to the Rink to hear the music, which Miss Love had tonight. It was very nice generally.

February 27, 1888: Mama is fixing up the studio today, and tonight Walter and I helped put up pictures, etc. and it looks very nice.

February 29, 1888: This morning I went and got some letter paper and violin strings for Mama, and she wrote a good many invitations for the party they are going to give. This afternoon we practiced several pieces on the harp, violins, and guitar to play tomorrow evening. This evening Roll came up and Susie took him up in the studio and they played a little on the harp.

And finally Thomas describes the grand opening party at his mother's studio:

March 1, 1888: Today I stayed home and helped the folks get ready for the party. At last we got all ready for the great party. At 8 o'clock the guests began to arrive, and the evening was replete with amusements and social conversation. At 10 o'clock refreshments were served, and it seemed to all go pretty well. Popcorn, ice cream, lemonade, egg kisses, macaroni, three kinds of cake, candied oranges, lemons

(Thomas also records the number of suitors his two sisters have each Sunday. On one particular Sunday, the sister had over 30 suitors visiting the Ryan house).

Lida Ryan and her children also participated and hosted music and art clubs, women's clubs, conversation club, self-improvement clubs, bicycle clubs, and something called the Dante club, and other social activities.

All of John and Lida's children were talented artistically, but it was their oldest daughter Susan who became the most accomplished. Susan Delaney Ryan Marsh (1865-1959) studied under J. Ottis Adams at his Muncie Art School, and she also studied art formally in Cincinnati and New York City. Susan was the founder and first president of the Muncie Art Students League (1892 with J. Ottis Adams). She founded the Muncie branch of the National League of American Penwomen and was president of the Pegasus Poetry Club.

Susan also participated in the Muncie Matinee Musicale, founded on January 12, 1889 by a group of young women who loved good music. Thirty-five women joined the traditional Wednesday afternoon sessions. The Boston Symphony Orchestral Club was the first artists' concert presented by the women's group. But the group also invited symphony orchestras from Mexico, Russia, and other countries around the world to Muncie.

In 1889, Susan married John Rollin Marsh, the son of a prominent banker, and moved into a home at 616 East Adams Street. With encouragement from Susan, John Marsh took up photography. His photographs in the Ryan/Marsh collection include home interiors and exteriors, families, and picnics. And Mr. Marsh built a photography studio at 218 East Adams Street.

The family was also gifted in the written word. In Thomas' diary, John Ryan's memoir about his wife, and personal correspondence we can see that the Ryans were very talented writers, too. The Archives in Bracken Library has a letter that John Rollin Marsh wrote to Susan when she was on vacation with their children. He eloquently and vividly expressed how he missed his family and signed the letter "Oceans of love to you and the children."

In 1895, the *Muncie Times* held a contest for local artists to create a work of art to be featured on a special Thanksgiving edition of the newspaper to be printed on silk fabric. Susan was the winner, and the newspaper is now housed in the Archives and Special Collections in Bracken Library.

Susan's career was impressive. And at that time she was working as a painter, music teacher, and art teacher while having two babies. Susan also managed to sew many of her family's clothes. And in 1905 when the luxurious Delaware Hotel opened in downtown Muncie, Susan was commissioned to decorate the ballroom and provide artwork for the lobby.

Susan received national recognition for a set of mini paintings that she created on ivory. Her works were displayed in the Hoosier Salon juried art show and were housed in the Student Center and art museum at Ball State University.

Like her mother before her, Susan Ryan had an art studio and school in her home. In fact, after Susan's marriage to John Marsh, the Marsh family home became a sort of conservatory for the artists of Muncie.

Susan Ryan's younger sister Mildred was also an accomplished musician, painter, and writer. Mildred's specialty was the harp. After Mildred's family moved to Chicago, she was still listed as a satellite member of the Arts Students League and the Muncie Art Association. Mildred's family donated her wedding gown to the Chicago Historical Society.

Susan and Mildred remained very actively involved in Muncie culture throughout their lives. And the Ryan family was well connected with other prominent Muncie families involved in the arts—Ball, Maring, Wysor, Tuhey, McCulloch, and Neely. If you're familiar with Muncie, you'll recognize these names shared with the names of buildings, streets, and parks.

So remember where we started? Back with J. Ottis Adams? One of Adams' students in Fort Wayne was Jane Ninde. Jane Ninde married Arthur Brady of Muncie in the summer of 1893. (He would become the Mayor of Muncie from 1902-1905). Arthur's sister Winifred Brady had studied under

Adams in Muncie for two years. When Adams' school closed, Winifred attended Drexel Institute in Philadelphia and the Art Students League of New York. You may wonder why she chose Drexel. It gets complicated.

Lucina Ball—older sister of the Ball brothers—was in charge of the curriculum at Drexel. So Lucina suggested Winifred attend the school. Winifred's sister Elizabeth "Bessie" was married to Lucina's brother, Frank Ball. So then Winifred married J. Ottis Adams at Frank and Bessie's home in Muncie. And Winifred went on to become an acclaimed painter in her own right.

Frank and Bessie Ball had two sons and three daughters—the eldest named Lucina Emaline or Lucy, born in 1896. So Lucy Ball is the Other Lucina. Lucy was born at Minnetrista, Frank Ball's home overlooking the White River. Lucy's maternal great-grandfather and uncle were mayors of Muncie. And at the time of her birth, the Ball Brothers Glass Works was a booming business and her father was its president. She was considered Muncie "royalty."

Lucy would attend Tudor Hall (which is now Park Tudor) in Indianapolis. Lucy enjoyed the theatrical arts and played the role of Alice in "Alice in Wonderland" in 1909. Lucy studied art and music in school, but also practiced in the culinary arts. Lucy hosted her first elaborate dinner party at the age of 15. (And she even made a wedding cake for a friend). Lucy and her sister Margaret toured Europe in 1913 and delighted in the cuisine and visited some of the best museums.

Lucy graduated from Mount Vernon Seminary in Washington, D.C. in 1916. She traveled to Hawaii in 1917, and when she returned to Muncie, she presented a program about the trip at the Universalist Church. The Ball family obviously enjoyed the advantages of world travel, but they also found it important to share their cultural experiences with the Muncie community.

Lucy's mother and father were very actively involved in the arts and culture of Muncie. Frank Ball purchased art from artists, auctions, estates, and dealers. His art collection was very unique. In 1918, Frank and his daughters Lucy and Margaret were riding the elevator at the Plaza Hotel in New York. When the elevator reached the ballroom floor, the family walked out into a huge crowd of people. Mr. Ball asked the elevator operator what was happening, and the operator replied that it was an auction of the art collection of George Hearn. Frank and his daughters were thrilled with the paintings. In fact, Frank had recently undergone eye surgery, and he was so excited to be able to see the paintings that he ended up purchasing over seventy works of art. Frank's passion inspired Lucy.

Lucy's wedding to Alvin Owsley was the biggest social event of 1925. And it served as a backdrop to all of the arts and culture that Lucy enjoyed. The flower arrangements were elaborate, including a wall of flowers in the room where the ceremony was held in Minnetrista.

Lucy's gown was specially designed. The Montani orchestra from Indianapolis played beautiful music. And the food enhanced the celebration. The *Indianapolis Star* featured the wedding on its front page. However the night did not go off without a hitch. A thunderstorm rolled through Muncie just as the ceremony was about to begin, and the electricity went out at Minnetrista. So all the Ball wives and sisters and cousins gathered candlesticks to fill the room. And Frank Ball drove three automobiles to the front of the home to shine the headlights into the house.

Lucy's husband Alvin was a diplomat who served in Europe, so Lucy spent her life engaged in diplomatic and philanthropic work. Lucy was actually presented to King Edward VIII in Buckingham Palace just before his abdication in 1936. She sponsored art galleries, museums, and operas.

Lucy's mother, aunts, and cousins were all advocates the arts and culture of Muncie. Most people in Muncie have heard the story of the Ball brothers, but the Ball wives, sisters, aunts, and mothers deserve the spotlight, especially for the cultivation of the culture during the Gas Boom industrial era of Muncie.

Bertha Crosley Ball and her children sponsored the installment of the bronze "Appeal to the Great Spirit" on Walnut Street near Minnetrista in memory of Edmund Burke Ball in 1929. Cyrus Dallin sculpted the piece in 1909, and the original stands at the Boston Art Museum.

Dallin created another statue called "Passing of the Buffalo" in 1929. The Native American chief's foot stands on a buffalo skull, and his arrows all gone. In 1931 Geraldine Rockefeller Dodge purchased the statue, and it was installed at her estate in New Jersey. Following her death, the statue was on display at Sotheby's in New York. In 1975, Edmund F. Petty (grandson of Margaret Ball Petty) coordinated its purchase with the Margaret Ball Petty Foundation as a tribute to his father.

The statue's purchase price of \$150,000 was a record for an American sculpture at that time. In 1976, the statue was donated to the City of Muncie and installed in front of the Ball Stores at the corner of Walnut and Charles Streets. The statue was restored and moved to the roundabout near Canan Commons today.

The City of Muncie commissioned Daniel Chester French to create a tribute to the Ball family. The Ball family's philanthropy in Muncie totaled \$7 million when the Beneficence statue was completed in 1937. More than 11,000 people donated to the memorial during the Great Depression.

The Ball family donated nearly 3,000 works of art to the Ball State University Art Museum beginning in 1936. The majority of the collections became part of the David Owsley Museum of Art permanent collection in 1995—named after Lucy Ball Owsley's son.

The Frank Ball Minnetrista home was destroyed by fire in 1967. But in 1988 the Minnetrista Cultural Center opened on the site of Lucy's former home by the same name. The pillars from the Minnetrista home were saved. And the center serves as a gathering place with exhibits and programs that focus on local history, gardens and nature, and, of course, art. Minnetrista houses clothing, letters, paintings, photographs, and other artifacts connected to the Goodlanders, Ryans, and Balls.

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