

**The Mystery of Sadie Waters: Miniatures, Misfortune, and Material Representation**

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In 1900 at the age of 33, Sadie Palmer Waters died in Versailles, France. A native of St. Louis, she lived in Paris from 1888 until her death as an American artist under the tutelage of Luc Olivier Merson. Merson, a French academic painter best known for his postage stamps and currency designs, was a member of the École des Beaux-Arts, and his influence shaped the style and acceptance of Sadie's work.<sup>1</sup> Her miniature portraits and illuminated, religious-themed paintings exhibited in Brussels, Paris, Ghent, London, New York, and in her hometown of St. Louis.<sup>2</sup> Young, wealthy and talented, she was the subject of paintings by important American artists Francis Davis Millet and Julius Rolshoven.

As one of just two American women recognized in the 1890s as trained in the technique of illumination, Sadie was arguably on her way to becoming one of the stars of the early twentieth-century art world.<sup>3</sup> Instead, a premature death ended her career and erased her from mainstream historic commentary. What she left behind however—a scattering of images in oil, bronze, watercolor and pastel—prevented her descent into complete oblivion. These representations provide a provocative glimpse of how Sadie saw herself, how others saw her, and how she was memorialized after her death. A chance find of fourteen miniature paintings in a dusty box at a junk store in Virginia spawned the quest of the present authors to piece together the life of this fascinating artist. Her story is revealed in the remnants she left behind and from historical records scattered across two continents.

Five years after the discovery of the paintings, the present authors conducted a preliminary online search of “Sadie Waters” to find out who she was. The search led to a bronze statue of a young woman located in St. Louis, Missouri's Bellefontaine

Cemetery.<sup>4</sup> The caption of the image read, “Sadie Waters, b. unknown, d. unknown.” Established in 1849, Bellefontaine is the resting place for many notable people such as U.S. Senator Thomas Hart Benton, beer-icon Adolphus Busch, and poet Sara Teasdale. Mausoleums and shrines to the departed abound in this necropolis, and among the most beautiful and intriguing of the memorials is that of Sadie Waters.

In this full-body bronze effigy of the dead, Sadie Waters is immortalized as a young woman, asleep, resting on a large tasseled pillow, hands folded across her lap, dressed in a flowing gown and small pointed boots, with her long hair in a single braid falling over her shoulder down her thigh. At the left edge of the statue base are the initials of the artist, “BEEP, Florence, 1900.” The unknown sculptor depicted Sadie a



sleeping beauty, eternally young and serene atop a bed of bronze. No date of birth or death, nor middle name, appear on the shrine; only her first and last name in bold, austere script.<sup>5</sup>

This elaborate physical representation of Sadie Waters juxtaposed with the glaring absence of any express demographical information at her gravesite elicited numerous questions: Who was Sadie Waters? When did she live? Does the effigy represent her at the time of her death? And if so, how and why did she die so young? Who loved her and

chose to immortalize her youth in such a grand work of art displayed prominently in this place of the dead?<sup>6</sup>

Many of the answers to these questions died with Sadie Waters, however certain objects and documents left behind supply clues to her life. This paper explores the relationship between the historic Sadie Waters and aesthetic representations of her in paintings and elsewhere, treating the multiple physical manifestations of her life like pieces of a puzzle that re-create, in part, her human experience. Here, Sadie's story is told by and through the surviving physical artifacts of her life: fourteen miniature paintings, her monument, her self-portrait, portraits others painted of her, and her will. It is a sad irony that Sadie is materially visible in works of art—in her exquisite memorial, and in her own paintings and paintings of her—and yet has been virtually invisible in the master narrative of important nineteenth-century American women.



Sadie Palmer Waters was born in St. Louis, Missouri in 1867. The date of her birth is unknown, but Sadie (also listed as “Sarah” in the 1870 St. Louis census) was the youngest of four children born to William Henry and Sarah Gregg Palmer Waters. Sadie's only sister, Kate Aorelia, died in 1862 at age five from malignant scarlet fever. The surviving children were Sadie and her two older brothers, Frank Alexander Waters, born in 1858, and William Darrah Waters, born in 1864.<sup>7</sup>

Sadie's parents married in St. Louis in 1855, however neither was native to Missouri. Born August 26, 1835, in Hamburg, New Jersey, Sadie's father, William Waters, moved to St. Louis in the decade before the Civil War. His family came to America in 1640 from the Welsh border of England, and their coat of arms can be traced to the rule of Richard III. His American grandfather, Anthony Waters, settled in the

colony of Massachusetts, practiced law, and in 1662 served as a juror in the Court of Assizes in New York City in one of the earliest American witchcraft trials.<sup>8</sup> Sadie's mother, Sarah Waters, was born August 3, 1837, in Ohio. Like her husband, Sarah also moved to St. Louis sometime before the Civil War and lived in Missouri until her husband's death in 1892. Sarah spent the next two decades in Europe where she died in Florence, Italy in 1913.<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that during her time abroad Sarah maintained ties to St. Louis through her membership in the St. Louis Mercantile Library Association and the Christ Church Cathedral (Episcopalian).<sup>10</sup> Little is known about her extended family in the city except that a William H. Gregg, her brother, held the private wakes of both Sadie in 1900 and Sarah in 1913 at his home on 3013 Pine Street.<sup>11</sup>

Sadie's parents were members of the elite St. Louis merchant class. In 1871 William Waters formed the Waters-Pierce Oil Company with Henry Clay Pierce, who became the fourth-wealthiest man in the United States by 1914.<sup>12</sup> Between 1878 and 1900 Waters-Pierce Oil controlled the Mexican domestic petroleum market and the United States domestic sale of petroleum west of the Mississippi. During this period, the company sold shares of its stock to Standard Oil, and after William Waters' death in 1892, became embroiled in an anti-trust lawsuit argued before the United States Supreme Court in 1908, a case Pierce lost.<sup>13</sup>

In most modern accounts of the Waters-Pierce Oil Company, William Waters is recognized as a founder, but discussion of the formative years of the company is overshadowed by the later legal battles between Pierce and Standard Oil. Despite the lack of information about Waters, it is clear that he was significant in the growth of the business through the 1870s, and although he died before the publicized trials of the early

twentieth-century, his name remained part of the company title after his death. In the early 1880s, Waters' youngest son, William Darrah, worked briefly as a clerk and cashier for the firm, but eventually chose agriculture over the oil business. In 1897 William Darrah Waters purchased Tallwood, a large farm in Albemarle County, Virginia where he lived until his death in 1917.<sup>14</sup> Waters' eldest son, Frank, pursued a career in mining, his father's secondary interest, and moved to Colorado Springs sometime during the 1880s, married a girl from Iowa, and had two sons.<sup>15</sup>

Sadie was born at the start of the golden age of St. Louis. In 1870 her hometown claimed approximately 311,000 residents and stretched across eighteen square miles, making it the nation's fourth-largest city.<sup>16</sup> Westward migration, railroad expansion, river traffic, and commercial growth following the Civil War spawned this period of growth, and William Waters, oilman, merchant, and mining investor, took advantage of economic opportunities. The Waters family lived at 2309 Locust Street in a section of the city that was considered among the most prestigious.<sup>17</sup> Locust Street ran through Lucas Place, the first planned residential community in the city. Lucas Place was designed in 1851 by James Lucas and architect George I. Barnett. A variety of features—including thirty-year deed restrictions, street access for private carriages only, construction restricted to private homes and churches, and a green-space buffer (Missouri Park, between the upscale neighborhood and the bustling commercial district)—made Lucas Place the ideal community for the privileged merchant class.<sup>18</sup>

The Waters family attended Christ Church Cathedral, an Episcopal church built in 1854 on the corner of Twelfth and Locust streets, a short distance from the Waters' home. In the cathedral index, Sadie's mother, Sarah Waters, is listed as "B.C.C." which

indicates that she was baptized, confirmed, and a communicant on May 3, 1857. Two of Sarah's children, Kate and Frank, appear in church records as baptized together on September 26, 1858, and both have burial records in the cathedral index—Kate's on March 23, 1862 and Frank's on May 13, 1905.

Interestingly, no ecclesiastic records exist for William Darrah or Sadie, the two younger Waters children. Misplaced records may explain the lack of known baptismal or death records for either child. It is also possible, however, that the church affiliation of the Waters family may have changed after the death of Kate in 1862, and such a change could explain why the younger children were not baptized, confirmed, or communicants of the Christ Church Cathedral.<sup>19</sup> Although Sarah Waters died abroad and was not an active member of the church during her twenty-one-year absence from St. Louis, as a communicant of the cathedral, her 1913 burial at Bellefontaine is recorded in the church index. Like her mother, Sadie also died abroad, but no church record of her 1900 burial at Bellefontaine exists. Likewise, no ecclesiastic records exist for William Darrah, who is buried at Riverside Cemetery in Charlottesville, Virginia, and who was the only member of the immediate Waters family not buried in the family plot at Bellefontaine. Perhaps no priest presided over Sadie's interment at Bellefontaine on November 13, 1900. Only a death notice in the local paper and an interment certificate document Sadie's burial.<sup>20</sup>

By the late 1890s every living member of the Waters family had left St. Louis—Frank to Colorado and New York; William to Scottsville, Virginia; Sadie and her mother to Paris, France. The primary legacy of the William Waters family remaining in the city was its funeral plot at Bellefontaine.

The St. Louis census of 1880 lists Sadie's occupation as "at school," but the details of her early education and life in St. Louis are limited.<sup>21</sup> From 1879 to 1881 Sadie attended Mary Institute, the preparatory school run by Washington University. From 1881 to 1886 she is listed as a student at the St. Louis School of Fine Arts.<sup>22</sup> In 1888 she left St. Louis to study with Luc Olivier Merson in Paris. Although there is scant personal information in the records, it is clear that she was a gifted artist who lived in a city that was very much a part of the late-nineteenth-century art world.<sup>23</sup> In 1904 art historian Clara Erskine Clement Waters<sup>24</sup> wrote an account of Sadie's early artistic ability:

From the earliest days of her childhood she was remarkable for her skill in drawing and working out, from her own impressions, pictures of events passing about her. If at the theatre she saw a play that appealed to her, she made a picture symbolic of the play, and constantly startled her friends by her original ideas and the pronounced artistic temperament, which was very early the one controlling power in her life.<sup>25</sup>

The events occurring around Sadie as she grew up in the gateway city to the West must have been thrilling. St. Louis's urban center was bustling with enterprising merchants, diverse people, and a thriving artistic scene. A progressive community, St. Louis claimed numerous art schools where many women and men received training and displayed their work in local fairs and expositions, including the annual St. Louis Exposition and Music Hall Association Fair. The Western Academy of Art—the first co-educational art school in the city—was established in 1859, and by 1870 women instructors taught in the Art and Design Department at Washington University, an institution within walking distance from Sadie's home. In 1879 the St. Louis School and Museum of Fine Arts at Washington University was established. The St. Louis School was led by a dynamic faculty that included Carl Guthertz,<sup>26</sup> a Swiss artist, trained at the École de Beaux-Arts in 1870 by Isadore Pils (the same artist who trained trained Luc



Olivier Merson in 1866). Gutherz helped establish both the school and museum, and taught at Washington University from 1875 to 1885.<sup>27</sup>

Sadie's family was familiar with the important artists of the day, particularly those who painted portraits of the American upper class. In 1888 Francis Davis Millet, one of the most celebrated American painters of the period, painted a commissioned portrait of Sadie.<sup>28</sup> Millet—who perished on the Titanic in 1912—and his friends Alfred Parsons, Edwin Austin Abbey, John Singer Sargent and Henry James formed the core of what is known as the “Broadway colony.” Starting in 1885, Millet, his family, and this interesting circle of friends communed regularly at an old house he owned in the country at Broadway, Worcestershire, England. John Singer Sargent painted *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose* (1885-1886) at Broadway, a painting of Millet's youngest daughter, Lily. Likewise, between 1885 and 1890, Millet produced many of his easel paintings while in residence at Broadway.<sup>29</sup> When on leave from the countryside, Millet often spent time in London at 54 Bedford Gardens, the studio of his friend Alfred Parsons who shared the space with Edwin Austin Abbey. Historians have placed Millet in America during 1888 on a cross-country trip of the United States that may have included stops in New York, where he had a studio, and/or in St. Louis, where he may have painted the portrait of Sadie.



Courtesy of Alex Cooper Auctioneers

In the portrait by Millet, a twenty-year-old Sadie stands in semi-profile and looks over her right shoulder. She wears a long, powder-blue dress that appears to be of taffeta or velvet, with a high ruffled blouse beneath the tight-fitting bodice. Her hands are gently placed behind her back, casually holding a dark pink rose which rests on the back of her dress. She does not smile, but there is serenity in her countenance, and a certain confidence in her beautiful, large

brown eyes that stare unflinchingly at the painter. To be able to commission a painter of Millet's exceptional skill and prestige reveals the social prominence of the Waters family. In 2005 the portrait by Millet of Sadie Waters sold at auction for \$10,000.<sup>30</sup>

At some point after she was painted by Millet, Sadie left for Paris to study with Luc Olivier Merson. It is not known precisely how Sadie arranged to study in Paris under Merson, although Carl Guthertz, the art professor at Washington University, may have been instrumental in helping the young artist from St. Louis find a mentor in Paris. By

merit of a posthumous account written by Gutherz in 1904, it is evident that he knew both Sadie and Merson, and was familiar with the tutelage arrangement:

As the Master and Student became more and more acquainted, and the great artist found in the student those kindred qualities which subsequently made her work so refined and beautiful...he took the utmost care in developing her drawing—the fidelity of line and of expression, and the ever-pervading purity in her work. The sympathy with all good was reflected in the student, as it was ever present with the master, and only those who are acquainted with M. Merson can appreciate how fortunate it was for Art that the young artist was under a master of his character and temperament.<sup>31</sup>

*Purity, fidelity, beautiful, refined*—these powerful and seemingly feminine words in Gutherz’s statement demonstrate his familiarity with Sadie’s work. He also clearly indicates that Merson paid attention to developing his young student, particularly her drawing. His claim that “the sympathy with all good was reflected in the student, as it was ever present with the master” indicates that his relationship with both the student and master extended beyond mere acquaintance.

Other important elegies by male artists of the age—for example, Paul Wayland Bartlett and Arthur Hoeber—indicate that Sadie was more than just an average American woman painter in Paris. All four of these men studied at the *École des Beaux-Arts*, the most highly regarded training ground for male artists in France. Both Carl Gutherz and Luc Olivier Merson studied with Isadore Pils, Professor of Painting at the *École de Beaux-Arts*, Merson in 1866 and Gutherz in 1870. Merson became a Professor of Drawing at the *École* in 1894—during Sadie’s training at his atelier (studio)—and in 1905 became a Professor of Painting, a position held decades earlier by his professor, Isadore Pils.<sup>32</sup> Until 1897, the *École des Beaux-Arts* was exclusive to men, and enrollment was very competitive. The ultimate annual competition among *École* students was the *Prix de Rome*, open only to French citizens but not restricted to *École* students,

and Merson won the competition in 1869. Those trained at the École undoubtedly carried the legacy of their masters to their own students. Sadie, while unable to attend the École, surely benefited from the private attention of Merson.

Like Merson and Guthertz, the American Paul Wayland Bartlett studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in 1881 and became one of the most distinguished American sculptors of the late nineteenth-century. Sculptures by Bartlett include the equestrian statue of Lafayette in Paris, the statue of Michelangelo in the Library of Congress, the arch-angels in the facade of the New York Public Library, and the pediment of the New York Stock Exchange.<sup>33</sup> Like Guthertz, Bartlett posthumously praised Sadie, and in 1903 described her skill in a passionate assessment:

In this epoch of feverish uncertainty, of heated discussions and rivalries in art matters, the quiet, calm figure of Sadie Waters has a peculiar interest and charm generated by her tranquil and persistent pursuit of an ideal—an ideal she attained in her later works, an ideal of the highest mental order, mystical and human, and so far removed from the tendencies of our time that one might truthfully say, it stands alone. Her talents were manifold. She was endowed with the best of artistic qualities. She cultivated them diligently, and slowly acquired the handicraft and skill which enabled her to express herself without restriction. In her miniatures she learned to be careful, precise, and delicate; in her work from nature she was human; and in her studies of illuminating she gained a perfect understanding of ornamental painting and forms; and the subtle ambiance of the beautiful old churches and convents where she worked and pored over the ancient missals, and softly talked with the princely robed Monsignori, no doubt did much to develop her love for the Beautiful Story, the delicate myth of Christianity—and all this, all these rare qualities and honest efforts we find in her last picture, *The Virgin*.<sup>34</sup>

In gentle, reverent language reminiscent of that used by Guthertz to describe Sadie's accomplishments, Bartlett claims Sadie's work *stands alone*, a powerful proclamation from a very prominent figure in the art world at the time. The assessments of her work by Guthertz and Bartlett are complemented by those of Arthur Hoerber, another École alumnus. In *The Mentor* thirteen years after Sadie's death, Hoerber, who

like Bartlett studied at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in 1881, extolled the skills that Sadie developed under the guidance of Merson.<sup>35</sup>

That Sadie Waters was praised so highly by these men, all at the top of the academic art world, is remarkable considering the minimal place she holds in today's historic narrative. Their posthumous homage for the unmarried, very wealthy, lovely and talented American suggests numerous questions about Sadie's disposition and personal relationships that cannot be answered. However, it is certain Sadie was single, in her early twenties, and recognized as a talent when she entered the atelier of Merson.

Sadie studied with Luc Olivier Merson from 1889 to 1900. During this period, about two thousand Americans studied in France each year, and as one journal of the time noted, "the artist is everywhere...He is numerous in Paris as the buttercups brocading a June meadow."<sup>36</sup> Women comprised a large number of these students because training in Paris allowed women the opportunity to become professional painters.<sup>37</sup> Many women studied at the *Académie Julian*, established in 1868 as a co-educational alternative to the official, state sanctioned, male-only *École des Beaux-Arts*. By 1880 there were six studios at the *Académie Julian*, two for men and four for women, and the faculty included the notable artists Bouguereau, J-Paul Laurens, Jules LeFebreve, Benjamin Constant and Tony Robert-Fleury.<sup>38</sup> Nude figure drawing was the central focus of the studio art experience in France, while in America it was still considered improper to teach this technical skill to females. Thus, many American women artists flocked to Paris to gain training in this method.

Luc Olivier Merson's atelier was private and not affiliated with the *Académie Julian*, and Merson personally selected each of his students. His was the only studio in

Paris where men and women studied the nude figure together, rather than in gender-segregated sessions. Nonetheless, *Godey's Ladies Book* declared Merson's studio "one of the most 'proper'," and noted that "none of the women students ever have to complain of their male comrades."<sup>39</sup> The advertised cost to study with Merson was forty francs entrance fee and thirty francs per month, and his studio operated from October 1<sup>st</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup> each year.<sup>40</sup>

In 1894 while Sadie trained with Merson, he was awarded a post as Professor of Drawing at the *École des Beaux-Arts*, evidence of his reputation as an esteemed academic painter. *Godey's* called Merson a "capital master" who "besides the fact of his own exceedingly striking talent...takes immense pains with the students who put themselves under his tuition."<sup>41</sup> Sadie made her studies in Paris entirely under the direction of Merson, whose expertise in the illumination technique (the use of gold and silver to light up vellum or ivory panels) and religious iconography were emulated in her work.<sup>42</sup>

Two of Sadie's most famous paintings, *La Vierge Au Rosier* and *La Vierge Au Lys* (the present location of these paintings is unknown), emulate the illumination technique found in Merson's paintings "Saint-Louis"(1888) and "La Vérité"(1901), both located in the Musée d'Orsay.<sup>43</sup> In 1903 Paul Bartlett said of Sadie's *La Vierge Au Rosier* that "the beauty and preciseness of this composition, the divine feeling not without a touch of



**La Vierge Au Rosier**

motherly sentiment, its delicacy so rare and so pure, the distinction of its coloring...give it a place unique in the nineteenth century.”<sup>44</sup>

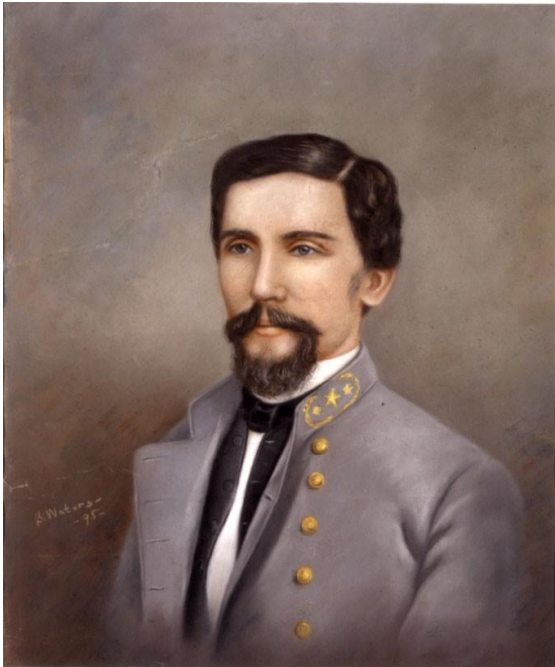
Recent scholarship on women in the Paris ateliers during the late nineteenth-century demonstrates that female students did not receive the same treatment as their male counterparts. Art historian Enid Zimmerman argues that women students were charged higher tuition and were not given the same level of instruction or attention as their male peers.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, art historian Lois Marie Fink observes that many French masters did not accept women, and that at the Académie Julian, women paid one hundred francs per month in contrast to the thirty francs male students paid: “twice as much for half the instruction, a principle followed at most ateliers throughout the city.”<sup>46</sup> Sadie’s experience with Merson, a French master, appears to be an exception. Despite Carl Guthertz’s eloquent summation of the attention Sadie received from Merson as his student, Merson’s general attitude about women artists is unclear. Historian Annegret Fauser notes that in 1903 when women were granted permission to compete in the *Prix de Rome*, Merson denounced the decision.<sup>47</sup> In this specific case, his desire to keep the competition a male-only event supports the arguments made by Zimmerman and Fink and complicates the understanding of Merson’s relationship with Sadie. Women who did find prestige in the art circles typically were “closely associated with successful male artists as their pupils, models, or daughters.”<sup>48</sup>

Sadie’s work may have been more positively received than that of other female artists because she worked in miniatures. For much of the mid-nineteenth-century, miniature painting was out-of-vogue, but during the final two decades of the century it experienced a rebirth. By 1890, if selected, an artist could display and sell their work in



two primary venues: the Salon of the Societe des Artistes Français or the more exclusive Salon of the Societe Nationale des Beaux-Arts.<sup>49</sup> In 1891, two thousand four hundred and eighty paintings displayed at the Salon Français and nine hundred fifty-one at the Salon Nationale.<sup>50</sup> Interestingly, there were *no* miniatures entered in the Salon Français in the 1870s, whereas in the 1880s five artists entered a total of 14 miniature works. In 1890, the year the Salon Nationale was founded, twenty-nine artists exhibited over ninety miniatures at the Salon Nationale, and an equal number exhibited at the at the Salon Français.<sup>51</sup> Sadie thus worked in a somewhat unique genre of painting where competition was, in comparison to other styles, more limited, yet one which had recently recaptured the attention of the art community.

During her tenure with Merson, Sadie's work was exhibited at the Salon Français,



Patrick Ronayne Cleburne, Tennessee State Museum

Champs Élysées, from 1890 to 1900.<sup>52</sup> Her primary genre was miniature painting on ivory in the mediums of watercolor and gouache, and her subject matter included portraiture and mythological and religious themes. Subjects painted by the young artist included European émigrés Clotilde de Molin and Alexandra Van Der Meade, as well as two Americans, Louise Thayer Burbank

(1891) and Patrick Ronayne Cleburne (1898). Sadie's miniature painting *La Vierge Au Lys* (the Virgin of the Lillies) received honorable mention at the Paris Exposition Universelles in 1900.<sup>53</sup>



Among Sadie's most acclaimed paintings during this time was a miniature painted in 1890 of Lady Jane Hading. Hading—to whom Sadie, for reasons still not completely understood, was eventually to bequeath a substantial part of her fortune—was a French commoner from Marseilles who had been plucked from obscurity to emerge a leader on the world opera stage.<sup>54</sup> Hading was also a popular stage actress whose audiences in Europe and America included wealthy socialites like the Vanderbilts and the French aristocrat Daniel Wilson, the son-in-law of Jules Grévy, Fourth President of the French Republic.<sup>55</sup> Many artists captured Jane Hading's likeness, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's 1898 drawing is among the most famous. A lithograph print of Toulouse-Lautrec's *Jane Hading* recently sold at auction for \$6,000.<sup>56</sup> Despite the competition to portray Hading in works of art, Sadie's painting of her held its own. In 1904 Clara Erskine Clement Waters wrote that Sadie's portraits in miniature were very successful and "that of Jane Hading was much admired."<sup>57</sup>

While Sadie was in Paris, the important American painter, Julius Rolshoven, drew a portrait of her. Born in Detroit, Rolshoven studied in Munich and Paris at the Académie Julian and was best known for his paintings of the American West. His 1894 portrait of Sadie is a pastel in black and white. She is slightly reclined in a chair with her right elbow placed atop the chair as her left arm gently rests in her lap. She wears a large, black hat that ties prominently in a bow beneath her chin and a white, chiffon-like dress that falls to the floor, her calves and feet excluded from the picture. The cuffs of the gown partially cover her hands. With an expression reminiscent of that in her Millet portrait, Sadie appears serious but calm, her lovely brown eyes confident as they gaze back at the artist. The pastel *Miss Sadie P. Waters* sold at auction in 1997 for \$7,000,

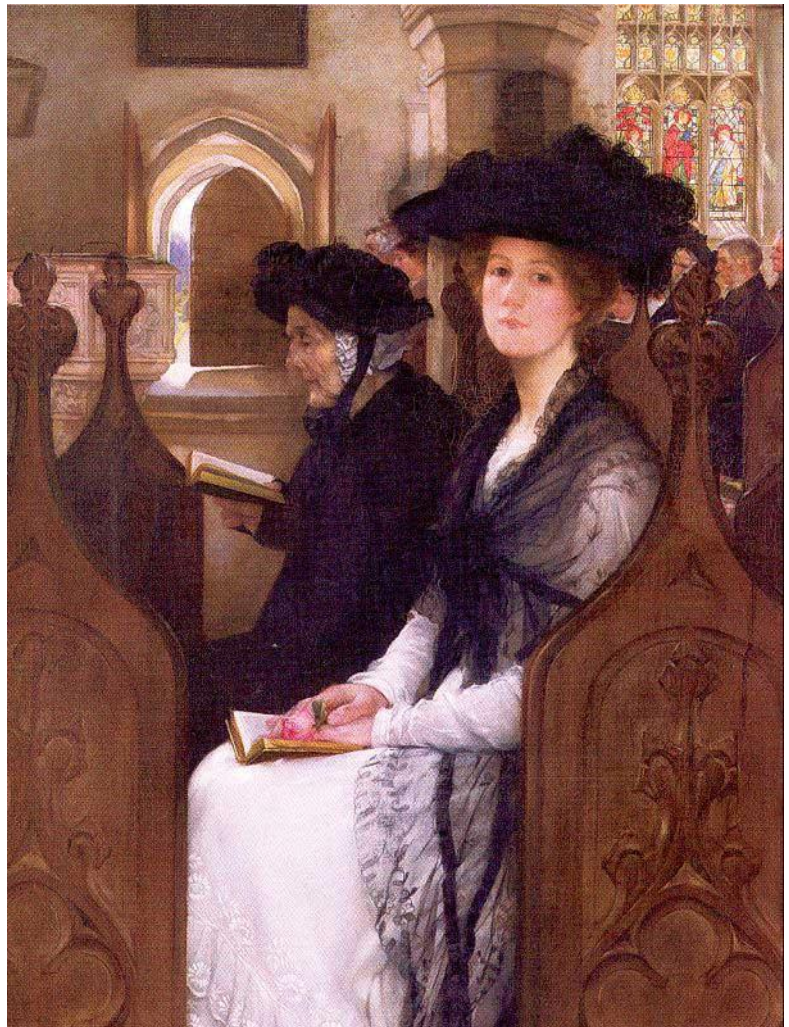
after having spent most of the last century covered by a mirror and hidden from view in the home of an elderly Waters descendant.<sup>58</sup> A few years after Rolshoven depicted Sadie, Sarah Waters (Sadie's mother) commissioned him to paint her portrait and that of her grandson, William Potter Waters, while the two were staying at Sadie's brother's estate, Tallwood, in Albemarle County, Virginia. The portrait *Mrs. Wm. H. Waters* was exhibited at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in London and the Salon Champ-de-Mars in Paris. Later it was displayed at the Art Institute of Chicago alongside Rolshoven's portrait of Sarah's grandson, *Master William P. Waters*.<sup>59</sup>

During her time in Paris, Sadie's life was interwoven with those of the great male painters of the era—painters who knew her, applauded her work, and painted her beauty. The *American Art Annual* of 1900-1901 provides a striking testament to the multifaceted connections that Sadie Waters had to the luminaries of the era's artistic community. On page ten of that edition, Sadie appears along with Julius Rolshoven, Francis Davis Millet, John Singer Sargent, Edwin Austin Abbey, and Paul Bartlett—a cast of artists who at some point in time played a role in shaping, judging, painting or touching her life. In 1900, for example, both Sadie and Rolshoven won honorable mentions at the Paris Exposition Universelle, where the jury included Sargent, Millet, Bartlett and Abbey. Rolshoven and Millet captured Sadie in oil and pastel, and Bartlett in words through his glowing critique of *La Vierge Au Rosier*. In addition, Millet, Sargent, and Abbey all painted at the studio of their friend Alfred Parsons, whose studio address at 54 Bedford Gardens appears on the tattered, brown paper-backing of Sadie's portrait of Jane Hading.<sup>60</sup>

On August 13, 1900, at the age of 32, Sadie Waters died in Versailles, France from “consumption of the bowels.”<sup>61</sup> An umbrella term, this diagnosis could have described a plethora of modern ills, including cancer, tuberculosis, cholera, and even problems associated with pregnancy.<sup>62</sup> It is highly probable she died of typhoid fever. Her family desperately tried to save her, evident by their choice to send her to a Gullah-speaking, African-American healer in Charleston, SC a few months before her imminent death.<sup>63</sup>

The paintings that survived Sadie provide details that ironically both illuminate and complicate the interpretation of her life and death. One such detail is a pink rose that is visible in two known paintings of her and a third in which she is the likely subject. In Victorian symbolism, the pink rose represents grace, first love, admiration or sympathy—all symbols with relevance to the unpacking of Sadie’s life.

Sadie holds a dark pink rose in the portrait painted by Millet (1888), which may represent Sadie’s grace and gentility or her innocence as a



*Wandering Thoughts*

Courtesy of David Emerson

young, unmarried woman. The young woman in the foreground of Millet's well-known painting *Wandering Thoughts*<sup>64</sup> also holds a pink rose and looks strikingly familiar with her confident gaze and large brown eyes. In the painting, a young woman sits on a pew in an old Gothic-style church, looking up from what appears to be a prayer book and gazes calmly at the viewer. An old woman sits to the right, focused on a prayer book held close to her face, fervent in the religious rites in which she is involved, while the young woman, head turned away from the pulpit, wearing a large black hat and a sheer black shawl, holds a pink rose atop the open prayer book at rest in her lap. The viewer sees her through the eyes of the painter who captures the clandestine moment when his eyes meet hers during church. She seems to abandon reverence to indulge in a moment of secret, sweet exchange with whomever is staring at her. The setting is sacred, yet emotion trumps the power of the prayer book. The young woman wears a white dress with a black shawl, a contrast in color that complements the battle between emotion and reverence. The title of the painting, *Wandering Thoughts*, begs the viewer to consider whose thoughts are wandering.

If Sadie did pose for this painting, Millet probably painted her in England where many of his easel paintings were done.<sup>65</sup> It can be inferred, based upon the scholarship on Millet, his familiarity with Sadie via her portrait, his judgment of her work at the Paris Exposition, and Alfred Parson's studio address at 54 Bedford Gardens scribbled across the back of Sadie's painting *Lady Jane Hading* that they met again after 1888. However, proof that the woman in *Wandering Thoughts* is Sadie can only emerge when the provenance of the painting is determined—a mystery which still eludes scholars familiar with Millet's career.<sup>66</sup> Despite the current prominence of the painting (it is visible on

many internet sites), no precise date or location of creation, nor information about the subject matter, is known.

As in the two paintings by Millet, Sadie also holds a fully bloomed pink rose in her undated self-portrait.<sup>67</sup> Self-portraits are often said to shed light upon the soul of the painter. If this is so, then Sadie's soul was brimming with subtle contradictions at the time she painted her self-portrait.

Rendered in pale blues and shades of white with shell-pink skin tones, the miniature painting of Sadie Waters on one hand evokes sublime peacefulness. She is bathed in cool light against an egg-shell blue landscape with what appears to be a river cutting diagonally through the picture plane. To her left are several poplar trees painted faintly and reflected in a small puddle of water. Behind her is a wide, blue sky with a mountain-scape on the horizon, She stands front and center with her shoulders and head turned towards the viewer, dressed in a white,



Self Portrait Courtesy of K. Humphreys

empire-waist gown and holding a fully-bloomed pink rose at her hip. Her face is beautiful, and her soulful, brown eyes look past the viewer into the distance. Her hair is

golden, and in the cloud behind her is a partial image of a face with the eyes, nose, and mouth of a child or possibly an angel. The linear quality of her drawing is precise, and the ethereal color palette clearly an influence of Merson.

Yet lurking behind this picture of peace and tranquility are tones of isolation, sadness, and perhaps even death. Sadie's brown eyes are at once wistful and forlorn. Her hands appear despondent, defeated, as if the rose has become a heavy burden that she is about to let drop to the ground—signifying perhaps lost love or a fall from grace. The clouds behind her easily transfigure into angel wings attached to her back, in an eerie foreshadowing of her impending death. Her slightly distended belly may be an early manifestation of the consumption that eventually killed her. However, several people who have viewed the self-portrait have offered an alternative explanation, commenting that Sadie actually appears to be in the early stages of pregnancy, and displaying all of the turmoil and conflicting emotion that would have accompanied that condition for a young unmarried woman living in a foreign country at the end of the nineteenth century. This observation, while obviously speculative, becomes markedly more plausible when viewed in light of Sadie's last will and testament.

Sadie wrote her last will and testament in 1893, seven years before her death.<sup>68</sup> Four clauses within the will describe the intended division of her \$90,000 estate.<sup>69</sup> In clause one, Sadie appoints her brothers, Frank A. Waters and William Darrah Waters, executors and trustees of her will, and in the second clause she directs them to pay her funeral expenses and all debts immediately after her death. In clause three, she bequeaths her godson, Vance Manson of New York City, five thousand dollars and her maid, Amelia Bugnon, one thousand dollars.<sup>70</sup> Nothing in the first three clauses of Sadie's will

is unexpected or remarkable. The fourth clause, however, includes two provisions so inflammatory that they triggered a lawsuit by her brother, William Darrah Waters, twenty years later, which made its way all the way to the Supreme Court of Virginia.<sup>71</sup>

In the controversial fourth clause, Sadie directs the executors of her estate to pay the actress Alfredine Jeanne Trefouret two thousand dollars per year (about \$47,000 in today's currency) for the whole of her natural life provided that she remain unmarried, and if she re-marry that the annuity cease. In addition, the executors are ordered to pay an orphanage situated at 32 rue de l'Yoette Omeuil, Paris, France, one thousand two hundred dollars (about \$23,000 in today's currency) per annum, until the youngest child "who shall be an inmate of the said orphanat at the time of my death" turned seventeen years old. After that, the trustees are instructed to begin to pay M<sup>me</sup>. Ida Jenny, the director of the orphanage, three hundred dollars per year for life. Finally, the fourth clause bequeaths any remainder of Sadie's estate to "William D. Waters and the heirs of Frank A. Waters, one half to each."<sup>72</sup> Aside from the family dynamics involved (for example, Sadie's "skipping over" her still-living brother, Frank, in favor of his heirs), Trefouret's and Jenny's prominence in Sadie's will further complicate the interpretation of her life.

An international star of the theater world who died in 1933, Alfredine Jeanne Trefouret was best known as Jane Hading, the actress whose portrait Sadie had painted in 1890.<sup>73</sup> In 1893, when Sadie wrote her will, Hading was a divorcee, a critically acclaimed actress, a celebrity, and apparently someone very close to Sadie Waters. One interviewer claimed of the wise and worldly actress, "Jane Hading was married but divorced and owns that she was never able to do justice to her genius until her divorce."<sup>74</sup> Tabloids

suggested she married for convenience, and when she divorced, they insinuated a connection between her and the son-in-law of President Jules Grevy, the rich politico Daniel Wilson, whose simpleton wife, Alice, served no competition to the starlet.<sup>75</sup> Hence, Jane Hading was seasoned from years of stage life, travel, tabloids, a failed marriage, and a commoner's background. But, she was also intensely beautiful, powerful and provocative. The same interviewer gushed, "Jane Hading is not only a woman of unsurpassed beauty, but of great character. In her presence you not only feel you are before a personality, but before a power."<sup>76</sup> When asked if women *artistes* were happy, Hading reportedly replied, "I would choose this life again and again, because all emotions in the world are tame and insipid compared to those of an artistic life...It is a fever, but one of those from which they do not necessarily suffer. It is a passion which they do not discuss. They live by it and on it."<sup>77</sup> So enamored was one critic of Jane Hading that he pondered, "Can you blame me if I send out my shallop of florid fancies toward the open sea of Jane Hading's mystic magnetism?"<sup>78</sup> He waxed poetic in the last line of his essay, and exclaimed, "With her artistic foot on the Havre quay, France becomes France once more! Helas! We must return to our ploughs."<sup>79</sup> His metaphor of the peasant and the nation no less reveals his epic appreciation for the actress.

As artists, both Sadie and Jane Hading must have shared this passion for their art, but beyond that common force, it is unclear why Sadie would be close to Jane Hading, given their differences in nationality, class, birthright and experience. Notwithstanding their similar careers as artists, Sadie Waters and Jane Hading thus seem highly improbable companions, compounding the mystery of why Sadie chose to recognize Hading so generously in her will. Just three years after she painted Hading, Sadie



bequeathed the actress a life-long dowry equivalent to approximately \$47,000 per year, to be terminated if Hading ever remarried. At this point, we can only speculate as to Sadie's motives. She may simply have been a benevolent woman who, out of kindness, provided for Hading, a less fortunate acquaintance. It is also possible that Sadie was in love with Hading, and in turn made provisions to sustain her financially *unless* Hading remarried. A more sinister alternative is that Hading, a seasoned and cunning celebrity, preyed upon the young, innocent and wealthy American, who may have been star-struck by the actress. Hading could have used the ploy of friendship to manipulate Sadie into establishing the stipend, which by the year Hading died (1933) amounted to well over the equivalent of 1.5 million dollars in payments.

As for the *orphelinat* funded in Sadie's will, it seems reasonable to assume that Sadie may have produced an illegitimate child and placed it in the orphanage and that, as a result of this arrangement, Sadie financed the *orphelinat* and endowed the director of the orphanage, Madame Jenny, with a lifetime stipend to guarantee the care of her child and perhaps to ensure Jenny's silence. Under this scenario, Madame Jenny's role was to care for the child until it reached the age of seventeen, then receive a payment each year—either to keep quiet or to maintain ties with the released “inmate” of the orphanage. The likelihood that Sadie gave birth to an illegitimate child gives rise to another possible explanation for the stipend awarded to Jane Hading in her will: Hading may have used her underclass connections to help a grateful Sadie locate a person to deliver the baby and/or to make the connections with the orphanage.

Clearly, many mysteries surround the life of Sadie Palmer Waters, and much work remains to be done in the interpretation of this life. Until now, she was little more

than a name, a list of exhibitions, and a few fleeting references in art reviews. She is remembered today only because, either by chance or divine intervention, a fraction of her work found its way from the Paris Salon to a junk store in Virginia and into the hands of an artist. It is uncanny that the present authors' quest to uncover the details of Sadie Waters' career began on August 13, 2008—exactly 105 years to the day after her death—in the same county in Virginia where her brother fought to retain the right to her estate and lost. There, bits and pieces of Sadie's collection, including her own work, once passionately praised by great male artists of the late nineteenth-century, ended up in a dusty box, stripped of relevance, import and history.

In this brush with near anonymity, Sadie is not alone. Countless other women artists have had their stories die with their own deaths. In the introduction of *Women in the Fine Arts, from the Seventh Century B.C. to the Twentieth Century A.D.*, Clara Erskine Clement Waters states:

In studying the subject of this book I have found the names of more than a thousand women whose attainments in the Fine Arts...entitle them to honorable mention as artists, and I doubt not that an exhaustive search would largely increase this number. The stories of many of these women have been written with more or less detail, while of others we know little more than their names and the titles of a few of their works; but even our scanty knowledge of them is of value.<sup>80</sup>

It is the intent of this paper to introduce Sadie Palmer Waters to the historical community and to stimulate further inquiry into her life. However, our research is ongoing and we hope that future investigation of the topics discussed here will ultimately provide answers to the numerous mysteries surrounding Sadie's life and death, and create new facets in the narrative of this important American woman.

**Appendix: 1888-1900 Timeline -Salon Entries/Exhibitions/Paintings**

1888 – Francis Davis Millet: *Portrait of Sadie P. Waters*  
oil on canvas  
9/11/05 sold at auction, Alex Cooper Auctioneers, Baltimore, MD: \$10,000.00

1890-1900  
Salon de la Societe des Artistes Français, Champs-Élysées,  
*Exhibition of miniature art*

1890 Hotel de Hollande, rue de la Paix 20  
*Portrait of Madame Jane Hading*, miniature

1891 Saint Louis, 2309 Locust Avenue  
*Jeune fille*, miniature

\**Portrait*: Louise Thayer Burbank

1893 Chez M.L.O. Merson, boulevard Saint-Michel, 175  
*Chrysanthemes*, miniature  
*Page d'album*, porcelain

1894 Julius C. Rolshoven, Paris: *Portrait of Miss Sadie P. Waters*  
pastel on paper  
12/14/97 sold at auction, Sloan's, Washington, DC: \$7000.00

1896 – rue de Belles-Feuilles, 49  
*La Vierge Au Lys*, miniature  
*Adrianna Van der Meyde*, miniature

1897 – rue de Belles-Feuilles, 49  
*Un portrait*, miniatures  
*Deux portraits*, miniatures

1897 Royal Academy, London and Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

1898

\**Portrait*: Patrick Ronayne Cleburne, Tennessee State Museum  
\**Unfinished Sketch*, Summer 1898, Tallwood, VA: William Potter Waters

1899 rue de Belles-Feuilles, 49  
*La Vierge Au Rosier*  
*Un portrait*, miniature

1900 Paris Exposition Universalles (honorable mention)  
*La Vierge Au Lys*  
Brussels, New York City, Ghent: Exhibitions of Work

Sources: auction records, [www.artprice.com](http://www.artprice.com); Chris Petteys, *Dictionary of Women Artists, An International Dictionary of Women Artists born before 1900*, (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1985), 738; Lois Marie Fink, *American Art at the Nineteenth-Century Paris Salons*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); *Dictionary of British Art: Victorian Painters*, v.4.

\* indicates portraits or commissions painted by Sadie Waters

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<sup>1</sup> Clara Erskine Clement Waters, *Women in the Fine Arts, from the Seventh Century B.C. to the Twentieth Century A.D.*, 1904, e-book located at <http://www.gutenberg.org> accessed 13 August 2005.

<sup>2</sup> The following resources list brief career details about Sadie Waters. All build from the information provided by Clara Erskine Clement Waters and incorrectly assign Sadie's birth 1869 rather than the correct date 1867. Chris Petteys, *Dictionary of Women Artists, An International Dictionary of Women Artists born before 1900*, (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1985); Norma Olin Ireland, *Index to Women of the World from Ancient to Modern Times: Biographies and Portraits*, (Boston: F. A. Faxon Co., 1970); Peter Falk, ed., *Who Was Who in American Art, 400 Years of Artists in America*, 3 v., (Madison, CT: Sound View Press, 1999); For Sadie Waters' exhibition list 1890-1900, see Lois Marie Fink, *American Art at the Nineteenth-Century Paris Salons*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) and Charlotte Yeldham, *Woman Artists in Nineteenth Century France and England: Their Art, Education, Exhibition Opportunities and Membership of Exhibiting Societies and Academies, with an Assessment of the Subject Matter of their Work and Summary Biographies*, (New York: Garland, 1984). Other than summary lists and short biographical information, no historical account of Sadie Waters exists.

<sup>3</sup> "An American Girl in Paris Winning Fame" *Deseret Evening News*, 24 June 1899, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>4</sup> Multiple images of Sadie Waters' online memorial located at <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=10157378> accessed 11 November 2007. It is important to note that no date of birth or death existed at this site until one month ago, a correction made at the behest of the authors of this paper. Original photo of Sadie's grave located at <http://forums.unfiction.com/forums/viewtopic.php?p=197851> accessed 13 August 2005.

<sup>5</sup> At the behest of the authors, Bellefontaine has added the birth and death dates of Sadie Palmer Waters to the cemetery records.

<sup>6</sup> Grave located in Lot #1082, the William Henry Waters Family, Block 25-26, Bellefontaine Cemetery, 4947 W. Florissant Avenue, St. Louis, MO, 63115.

<sup>7</sup> Certificate of interment, Kate Waters, Bellefontaine Cemetery, 23 March 1862, Bellefontaine Cemetery Association Archives, St. Louis, MO; See 1860 United States Federal Census, St. Louis, Ward 5, St. Louis, Missouri and 1870 United States Federal Census, St. Louis, Ward 5, St. Louis, Missouri located at <http://www.ancestry.com> accessed 5 March 2006.

<sup>8</sup> "William Darrah Waters," in *Makers of America: Biographies of Leading Men of Thought and Action, the Men who Form the Bone and Sinew of American Prosperity and Life*, (Washington, DC: B.F. Johnson, 1915-1917), 316.

<sup>9</sup> *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1913, p. 9 c. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Fifty-Fifth and Sixty-Fifth Annual Reports of the St. Louis Mercantile Library Association, 1901 and 1911, located online at <http://books.google.com> accessed 13 January 2008; Email Correspondence with Susan G. Rehkopf, Archivist and Registrar, Diocese of Missouri, St. Louis, MO, 20 June 2007 and 10 July 2007, transcript held by author.

<sup>11</sup> See Sarah Waters' death notice, *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1913, p. 9 c. 4 and Sadie Waters' death notice, *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 11/10/1900, p. 9 c. 5.

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<sup>12</sup> See Water-Pierce Case located at [http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/WW/jrw1\\_print.html](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/WW/jrw1_print.html) accessed 10 April 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Jonathan C. Brown, *Oil and Revolution in Mexico*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 10. See *University of Pennsylvania Law Review and American Law Register*, Vol. 57, No. 9, Volume 48 New Series (Jun., 1909), 649; *The Virginia Law Register*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Jun., 1909), 166; James William Coleman, “ Law and Power: The Sherman Antitrust Act and Its Enforcement in the Petroleum Industry,” *Social Problems*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Feb., 1985), 268. For a summary of the case, see Dr. John Crighton, National Inventory of Historic Places Nomination Form, 10 March 1981, 8-9, located at [www.dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/82003125.pdf](http://www.dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/82003125.pdf) accessed 12 January 2008.

<sup>14</sup> “William Darrah Waters,” 312.

<sup>15</sup> Information on William H. Waters’s mining investment is available in his probate records, digitized and available online at [www.sos.mo.gov/archives](http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives). William Darrah Waters’ purchase of Tallwood located in *The Daily Progress*, Charlottesville, Va., 15 July 1897. Frank’s first marriage produced two children, a son William Henry who lived in Paris and worked for American Express before and after his service in World War I and a daughter, Alexandrina Gerard de Sousanton. With his second wife, Francis Julia Waters, he produced two sons, Frank Alexander and Godfrey Kissell, the latter whom lived with his wife Eleanor in New York City where he was an insurance broker. See 1900 United State Census, Colorado Springs, Colorado and US Passport Records for William Henry Waters, Godfrey Kissell Waters, and Francis Julia Waters located at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) accessed 10 September 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Information on the history of the city located at <http://stlouis.missouri.org/heritage/History69/#golden> accessed 23 February 2007.

<sup>17</sup> The death certificates of the immediate and extended Waters family listed the addresses of the deceased at the time of their burial at Bellefontaine which in turn facilitated the spatial mapping of the family between 1870 and 1913. None of the immediate Waters family lived in St. Louis after 1892, and death notices in the local paper reveal only the location of family wakes- in the home of William H. Gregg, brother of Sarah Waters. Waters Family interment records, Bellefontaine Cemetery Association, St. Louis, MO.

<sup>18</sup> Information on Lucas Place located at [http://stlcin.missouri.org/history/eventdetail.cfm?Master\\_ID=399](http://stlcin.missouri.org/history/eventdetail.cfm?Master_ID=399) accessed 1 January 2006.

<sup>19</sup> Email Correspondence with Susan G. Rehkopf, Archivist and Registrar, Diocese of Missouri, St. Louis, MO, 20 June 2007 and 10 July 2007, transcript held by author.

<sup>20</sup> See death notice for Sadie P. Waters, *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 11/10/1900, p. 9 c. 5.

<sup>21</sup> See 1880 United States Federal Census, St. Louis, Ward 5, St. Louis, Missouri located at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) accessed 12 December 2005.

<sup>22</sup> Email from Miranda Rectenwald, Washington University archivist, 19 October 2009.

<sup>23</sup> A comprehensive history of St. Louis art schools and important people who taught and trained at local institutions in the late nineteenth-century is Elaine Celeste Tillinger, *The Lure of the Line; Influences, Tradition, and Innovation in the Education and Career of a Woman Artist: Cornelia Field Maury (1866-1942)*, Ph.D. dissertation, St. Louis University, St. Louis, MO., 1995. Dr.

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Tillinger provides an excellent, detailed account of the city's art scene, women painters, and the role of Paris in late nineteenth-century art education.

<sup>24</sup> The authors have not established a relationship between Sadie and Clara Waters but believe there is a possibility that they were related.

<sup>25</sup> Waters, *Women in the Fine Arts, from the Seventh Century B.C. to the Twentieth Century A.D.*, 357.

<sup>26</sup> See Tillinger, *The Lure of the Line; Influences, Tradition and Innovation in the Education and Career of a Woman Artist: Cornelia Field Maury (1866-1942)*, 28.

<sup>27</sup> Information about Carl Guthertz see Marilyn Masler, "Carl Guthertz: Memphis Beginnings," *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers*, 46 (1992): 59-72.

<sup>28</sup> There is no record of the commission in the Millet papers at the Archives of American Art, and no mention of the Waters family in any of the documents in the collection. See Francis Davis Millet and Millet Family Papers, 1858-1984, *Archives of American Art*, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. That the portrait was commissioned is assumed by the authors of this paper.

<sup>29</sup> *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose* located in the Tate Gallery, London. See Marc Simpson, "Windows on the Past: Edwin Austin Abbey and Francis Davis Millet in England," *American Art Journal*, Vol.22 (Autumn, 1990), 64-89; H. Barbara Weinberg, "The Career of Francis Davis Millet," *Archives of American Art Journal*, Vol.17, 1(1977), 2-18. Francis Davis Millet and Millet Family Papers, 1858-1984, *Archives of American Art*, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; Judith Curtis, "The Easel Paintings of Francis Davis Millet," *American Art Review*, Vol. 11, 2(1999), 120-125; Francis Davis Millet Artist File located at Frick Research Library, New York, New York; William A. Coffin, "Francis Davis Millet's Easel Pictures," *Art and Progress* 3, 9 (July 1912): 646; Charles M. Skinner, "The Domestic Pictures of Frank D. Millet," *International Studio* 32, no. 128 (October 1907), 111. The most comprehensive study on Broadway and Millet's circle of friends who visited and painted there is Marc Simpson's dissertation, *Reconstructing the Golden Age: American Artists in Broadway, Worcestershire, 1885-1889*, 2 Volumes, PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1993. Millet went down on the Titanic in 1912. A website devoted to this incident and to Millet's life is located at <http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/titanic-biography/francis-davis-millet.html> accessed 24 May 2006. Another website devoted to the Broadway colony is located at <http://www.cotswolds.info/arts-crafts-antiques/broadway-artists.shtml> accessed 22 January 2007.

<sup>30</sup> See H. Barbara Weinberg, "The Career of Francis Davis Millet"; Auction record from Alex Cooper Auctioneers, Baltimore, Maryland, 11 September 2005. The portrait was included in an exhibit at the Academy of Fine Arts in New York City in 2008 but the museum archivist will not release information about the owner of the painting that sold in 2005.

<sup>31</sup> Waters, 357.

<sup>32</sup> H. Barbara Weinberg, "Nineteenth-Century American Painters at the École des Beaux-Arts," *American Art Journal*, Vol. 13, (Autumn, 1981), 71. This article includes a matriculation list from 1870 to 1900.

<sup>33</sup> Located at <http://www.bronze-gallery.com/sculptors/artist.cfm?sculptorID=59> accessed 23 December 2007.

<sup>34</sup> Waters, 357-358.

<sup>35</sup> *The Mentor*, Vol.18, 4,(February 17, 1913).

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<sup>36</sup> “Art Students in Paris,” 220.

<sup>37</sup> Lois Marie Fink, *American Art at the Nineteenth-Century Paris Salons*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 137.

<sup>38</sup> L. Jerrold and Arthur Hornblow, “Studio Life In Paris,” *Godey’s Ladies Book* (1896), 131, located at <http://books.google.com/books?id=O4hMAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA134&dq=studio+life+in+paris&output=html> accessed 22 January 2008. Lois Marie Fink argues that by 1889 the Academie Julian had three, not four, ateliers for women; see Fink, 136.

<sup>39</sup> Hornblow, “Studio Life In Paris,” 134.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 134. The modern cost would be equivalent to a \$1000 dollar entrance fee and approximately \$700 per month.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>43</sup> Images available online at <http://www.coppoweb.com/merson/fr.oeuvre5.php> accessed 1 March 2006. This website contains images of his paintings, currency, stamps, and letters plus a brief biographical sketch.

<sup>44</sup> Waters, 138.

<sup>45</sup> Enid Zimmerman, “The Mirror of Marie Bashkirtseff: Reflections about the Education of Women in the Nineteenth Century,” *Studies in Art Education*, 30, 3(1989), 171. Before 1897 American women who sought Parisian training had to look elsewhere because the École des Beaux-Arts did not accept women. See H. Barbara Weinberg, “Nineteenth-Century American Painters at the École des Beaux-Arts,” 69.

<sup>46</sup> Lois Marie Fink, *American Art at the Nineteenth-Century Paris Salons*, 136.

<sup>47</sup> Annegret Fauser, “La Guerre en dentelles”: Women and the “Prix de Rome” in French Cultural Politics,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 15, 1(Spring, 1998), 85.

<sup>48</sup> “Women Artists in Nineteenth Century France” located at [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/19wa/hd\\_19wa.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/19wa/hd_19wa.htm) accessed 26 September 2012.

<sup>49</sup> The Salon Français, Champs-Élysées, was the more established venue which served both the commercial and aesthetic interests of artists in Paris. If selected by the Salon Français jury, an artist could both display and potentially sell his artwork. However, by 1890 the Salon Français was criticized as seeming bazaar-like due to crowded displays, average art, and overt commercialism. In reaction, a group of French academic painters formed the Salon of the Societe Nationale des Beaux-Arts in 1890. Selection was exclusive, membership was by invitation only, and the displays were less crowded and located on the Champ-de-Mars in spacious galleries. Interestingly, Sadie did not exhibit any of her paintings at the Salon Nationale, the more exclusive venue.

<sup>50</sup> Michelle C. Montgomery, “The Modernisation of the Salon of the Societe Nationale: Creating a Sympathetic Exhibition Venue,” *APOLLO: The International Magazine for Collectors*, 1 October 2003 located at <http://www.apollo-magazine.com/archive/> accessed 10 October 2005.

<sup>51</sup> Fink, 253.

<sup>52</sup> See appendix for a list of Sadie Waters’ Salon entries compiled from [www.artprice.com](http://www.artprice.com); Chris Petteys, *Dictionary of Women Artists, An International Dictionary of Women Artists born before 1900*, (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1985), 738; Fink,



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*American Art at the Nineteenth-Century Paris Salons*; Dictionary of British Art: Victorian Painters, v.4; Waters, *Women in the Fine Arts, from the Seventh Century B.C. to the Twentieth Century A.D.*.

<sup>53</sup> Florence Levy, ed., *American Art Annual, 1900-1901*, Vol.III, (Boston: Noyes, Platt & Company, 1900), 10.

<sup>54</sup> Michele Majer, ed., *Staging Fashion, 1880-1920: Jane Hading, Lily Elsie, Billie Burke* (Yale University Press, 2012).

<sup>55</sup> Insinuation of the connection between the divorced Hading and Daniel Wilson in "Director Koning Dead" in *The New York Times*, 3 October 1894 located at [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) accessed 13 March 2008. Images of Jane Hading available in Harry Saint Maur, "Jane Hading," *Muncey's Magazine*, Vol.XIV, October 1895 to March 1896, (New York: Frank Munsey, 1896), 159-162 located at <http://books.google.com/books?id=6MgRAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA160&dq=jane+hading&lr=&output=html> , accessed 20 March 2008. Sadie Waters' portrait of Jane Hading is similar to the picture on page 161 where Hading is posed as her character in "Nos Intimes."

<sup>56</sup> See auction records for Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec at [www.artprice.com](http://www.artprice.com) .

<sup>57</sup> Waters, 357.

<sup>58</sup> "Exhibition of Paintings by Julius Rolshoven," The Art Institute of Chicago, 14-29 January 1905 located at [www.artic.edu/aic/libraries/pubs/1905/AIC1905JULIUSROLSHOVEN\\_comb.pdf](http://www.artic.edu/aic/libraries/pubs/1905/AIC1905JULIUSROLSHOVEN_comb.pdf) accessed 10 February 2006; Auction record, Sloan's, Bethesda Maryland, 14 December 1997, Lot # 972 located at <http://web.artprice.com/client/prvisu.aspx?id=NjUxODczMDU1NDc2NzUyLQ==#reprod> accessed 15 September 2007. An image of the portrait is available at [www.artprice.com](http://www.artprice.com).

<sup>59</sup> See "Exhibition of Paintings by Julius Rolshoven."

<sup>60</sup> The full text reads "Artist: Sadie Waters, c/o Alfred Parsons, 54 Bedford Gardens, Kensington."

<sup>61</sup> Death Certificate, Sadie P. Waters, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Vol. OS 3, p. 126, registration #482, Certificate #6965, Division of Health, City of St. Louis, St. Louis, MO; Burial Permit, Sadie P. Waters in Waters Family File, Bellefontaine Cemetery Association Archive, Bellefontaine Cemetery, St. Louis, MO.

<sup>62</sup> A modern example of this sort of umbrella term is the label "dermatitis" for a skin condition that has multiple manifestations which overlap with diagnoses of other illnesses. Interview regarding the possible modern medical diagnosis for "consumption of the bowels" circa 1900 conducted with Dr. William Singleton Ogden, Associate Professor of Surgery, Duke University Medical Center, Veterans Administration Hospital , Asheville, NC, 29 December 2006. A secondary interview regarding this question was conducted with Dr. Gregory S. Motley, Asheville, NC, 15 February 2007. Both agreed that pregnancy or associated complications could be a possible cause of consumption of the bowels; however, both also agreed that tuberculosis was most likely the culprit rather some sexually transmitted disease or pregnancy. Ulcerated bowels, often diagnosed by the term "consumption," typically stemmed from advanced tuberculosis.

<sup>63</sup> "St. Louisans in Paris," *The St. Louis Republic*, 9 July 1900, page 4 located at <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84020274/1900-07-09/ed-1/seq-4/?words=Waters+Sadie?date1=1899&rows=20&searchType=basic&state=&date2=1900-proxtext=%22Sadie+Waters&y=0&x=0&dateFilterType=yearRange&index=2> accessed on 26 September 2012.

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<sup>64</sup> Image of *Wandering Thoughts* available online at <http://www.bertc.com/subthree/millet.htm> and [http://www.jssgallery.org/Other\\_Artists/Millet\\_Francis\\_D/Wandering\\_Thoughts.html](http://www.jssgallery.org/Other_Artists/Millet_Francis_D/Wandering_Thoughts.html) accessed 20 May 2006. It is the theory of the authors of this paper that Sadie Waters is the subject of *Wandering Thoughts*. Further research will hopefully prove this theory, and the search for the answer to this painting's mysterious provenance continues.

<sup>65</sup> Curtis, "The Easel Paintings of Francis Davis Millet," 125.

<sup>66</sup> Email Correspondence with Marc Simpson, PhD, Curator of American Art, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute and Associate Director, Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art, transcript held by author. Dr. Simpson did not know the provenance of the painting or pursue it because it was outside the scope of his research project.

<sup>67</sup> Sadie Waters, Self-Portrait. Private collection of Charles Evans Humphreys.

<sup>68</sup> See Last Will and Testament of Sadie Palmer Waters, located in the appeal documents of William Darrah Water, *Duke Papers*, MSS 79-6, Box 63, Arthur J. Morris Law Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.

<sup>69</sup> \$90,000 in 1893 is equal to 2.1 million dollars today. Conversion table located at <http://www.measuringworth.com>, accessed 20 February 2008.

<sup>70</sup> Amelia Bugnon was three years older than Sadie, a native of France, and appears on the ship manifest of the *La Bretagne* in 1882 that sailed from Havre to New York City, record located at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com).

<sup>71</sup> As executor, William Waters carried out the provisions set forth in clause four of his sister's will from 1900 until 1913. He paid Trefouret her annual stipend, obliged the trusts made to the orphanage until they were fulfilled, and thus paid Jenny three hundred dollars per year. He continued this until his mother (Sarah G. Waters ) died in 1913. Sarah G. Waters left her entire estate to her only living child, William Darrah Waters, who in turn became executor of the estates of both his sister and his mother. Having died in 1905, Frank, the other brother, never served as an executor of Sadie's will. However, Sadie did bequeath half of the remainder of her estate—after the annuities to Trefouret and Jenny were paid—to Frank's heirs. This is interesting because she gave half of the remainder of her estate to William Darrah Waters and the other half to the *heirs* of Frank (*not* Frank himself). Frank was alive in 1900 when Sadie died, and the fact he was skipped over may indicate that he was sick or possibly a person Sadie disliked at the time she wrote her will in 1893. Frank was ten years her senior and had served as executor of Sadie's father's estate, sent to probate in 1892 in St. Louis, the year before Sadie wrote her will. (*See* Probate Records, William Henry Waters, St. Louis Judicial Records, Department of Archives, located at <http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/mojudicial>) Frank's heirs included a second wife and four children, two from his first marriage, and none received anything in the will of Sarah G. Waters. Sarah Waters did not leave her eldest son's family anything, even though the youngest two grandchildren were barely adolescents at the time of her death. She did, however, leave property to her grandson William Potter Waters, William's son, and silver candelabras to his wife, Ella, an indication that she favored this family.

William Darrah Waters challenged the will and lost at the circuit court level in Albemarle County, VA, and subsequently appealed the trial court's decision. On January 12, 1915, the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia in Richmond affirmed the decision by the Circuit Court of Albemarle County in favor of defendants Alfredine Jeanne Trefouret and Ida Jenny of Paris, Republic of France against the appellant, William Darrah Waters of Scottsville, Virginia. William Darrah Waters, executor of the estate of Sarah

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G. Waters, made the appeal against Trefouret and Jenny from an earlier decree that construed the will of his sister, Sadie Palmer Waters, in favor of the defendants. Waters invoked the rule of construction, that when two provisions in a will are irreconcilable the latter must prevail, to ask the court to construe the fourth clause of his sister's will in his favor and overturn the decision of the lower court. He lost. "Waters v. Trefouret" *Cases Decided in the Supreme Court of Appeals in Virginia*, Vol. CXVII, (From January 1, 1915 to November 1, 1915), (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1916), 187; Southeastern Reporter, "Waters v. Trefouret et al.," 1078-1080; Handwritten will of Sadie Palmer Waters in Appeal of William Darrah Waters, executor, 23 March 1914 in *Duke Papers*, MSS 79-6, Box 63, Arthur J. Morris Law Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.

Frank's heirs—Francis Waters (wife), La Baronne Alexandrina Gerard de Sousanton, William H. Waters, Frank Waters, and Godfrey Waters—joined with Trefouret and Jenny as defendants against William Darrah Waters in the 1914 case known as "Waters v. Trefouret." Whether William Darrah Waters asked the court in earnest to determine the best way to settle the estate of Sadie or in anger to deny the opposition their claim of Sadie's money is unknown. It is clear that at Sadie's death, William Waters did not disburse the principal of her estate, instead he maintained it, making yearly payments as stipulated by clause four and monitoring the industrial securities that provided the funds. The heirs of Frank Waters, upon receiving nothing at the death of Sarah Waters, expected their share of Sadie's estate, the principal of which was intact in order to finance the payments to Trefouret and Jenny "for the whole" of their natural lives. To settle Sadie's estate was impossible without court assistance because it was not known how long Trefouret and Jenny would live *the whole of their natural lives*, and it is not known how William Waters felt about the pool of defendants that included family and two French women. In turn, by 1914, the question of how to settle the distribution of Sadie's estate and maintain the wishes of the testatrix, particularly those due to Frank's family and those guaranteed Trefouret and Jenny, went to court in Albemarle County.

<sup>72</sup> Clause Four, Last Will and Testament of Sadie Palmer Waters.

<sup>73</sup> See Michele Majer, ed., *Staging Fashion, 1880-1920: Jane Hading, Lily Elsie, Billie Burke* for a short biographical sketch of Hading.

<sup>74</sup> Max O'Rell, *Between Ourselves: Some of the Little Problems of Life*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1902), 164.

<sup>75</sup> Maur, "Jane Hading," *Munsey's Magazine*, Vol. XIV, (October 1895 to March 1896), 160.

<sup>76</sup> O'Rell, *Between Ourselves*, 161.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>78</sup> C. M. S. McLellan, "In the Limelight's Glare," *The Theatre, An Illustrated Magazine*, Vol. IV, (New York: The Theatre Publishing Company, 1889), 383.

<sup>79</sup> McLellan, "In the Limelight's Glare," 384.

<sup>80</sup> Waters, 4.