EMMA FORDYCE MACRAE COLLECTION

Creator: Emma Fordyce MacRae; various
Dates: 1850-2008 (bulk 1915-1957)
Quantity: 6 document boxes
Acquisition: Accession #: 2018.023 ; Donated by: Jennifer Kissel
Identification: A91 ; Archive Collection #91
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Biographical Note
Emma Fordyce MacRae was born Emma Dean Fordyce on April 27, 1887, in Vienna, Austria to American parents, Dr. John Addison Fordyce and Alice Dean (Smith) Fordyce. Raised in New York City, MacRae’s father was a professor of dermatology at New York University and later Columbia University, while her mother came from inherited wealth. MacRae was exposed to the arts through yearly visits to Europe and her primary education at Miss Chapin's School and the Brearley School, both all-girls schools in Manhattan. She later pursued her artistic training at the New York School of Art under Kenneth Hayes Miller and at the Art Students League under Luis Mora and E.F. Blumenschein. Additionally, MacRae continued her studies under John
Sloan and George Bridgeman before opening studios in New York and in Gloucester. Her first exhibited work was “Italian Fishing Boats,” shown at the Pennsylvania Academy in 1918.

Starting early and persisting throughout her career, MacRae’s paintings fell into three main categories: floral still-life, figural studies (mostly of women), and landscapes. She worked in a flat, linear, primarily two-dimensional style with references to Old Masters and Japanese prints. MacRae was known for her unique painting style where she used paint sparingly and often scrapped away sections of paint to reveal a textured, chalky canvas. These techniques gave her paintings an antiqued look, while also feeling modern.

Throughout her long and illustrious career, MacRae’s paintings were exhibited at several prestigious museums and galleries throughout the country. These included: The National Academy of Design, Pennsylvania Academy, Carnegie International in Pittsburgh, Chicago Art Institute, John Herron Art Institute of Indianapolis (now the Herron School of Art and Design), the Corcoran Art Gallery in Washington D.C., Currier Museum of Art, and Boston Art Club. Emma also exhibited paintings between 1937 and 1945 as part of The Philadelphia Ten Painters. The Philadelphia Ten, also known as The Ten, was a group of female artists from the United States who exhibited together from 1917 to 1945.

In addition to the Philadelphia Ten Painters, MacRae was a part of several artists groups and organizations, including the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors, Allied Artists of America, North Shore Art Association, National Association of Mural Painters, Boston Art Club, The Philadelphia Ten Painters, and New York Society of Painters. She received full membership in the National Academy of Design in 1951.

MacRae also received several awards for her paintings, including: Academy of Design awards for “Cosmos” and “EasterLilies,” the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors for “Neda Gray”, the Kingdon Gould Prize of the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors for “Stelka” (1928), The Edith Penman Memorial Prize of the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors for “Stelka” (1934), and the National Arts Club Medal for “Cosmos” (1930).

Emma Fordyce MacRae was married twice. The first in 1910 to Thomas MacRae, which was dissolved in 1920, although the couple lived together for less than a year. The second to Dr. Homer Swift in 1922. She had one child, Alice MacRae, from her first marriage. MacRae retained her first married name throughout her professional painting career. Personally, she went by Swift upon her second marriage.

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**Acquisition Note**

Gift of Jennifer Kissel, ex-wife of Stephen Kissel (grandson of Emma Fordyce MacRae).
Scope and Content of the Collection

This is a personal manuscript collection of Emma Fordyce MacRae regarding her private life, domestic life, career, and extensive information about her family. It includes paper, photographs, diaries, address books, books, and objects, including embroidery, wood, and a weapon. The paper contents range from correspondence to legal documents to handwritten notes. The collection ranges from 1850 to 2008, while the bulk of the materials date from 1915 to 1957.

The largest series, Series 1: Correspondence, is broken down into three sub-series: family correspondence, friends and acquaintances to Emma Fordyce MacRae, and professional correspondence to Emma Fordyce MacRae. A large section of the first subseries, family correspondence, is not addressed to Emma, but rather other family members, including a large section of letters addressed to her parents. The exception to this is the correspondence from Stephen Kissel to his grandmother, Emma, which begins with his first childhood letters and continues throughout the rest of her life. The second subseries contain letters addressed to Emma from several friends and acquaintances with many references to Emma’s paintings and exhibitions. This sub-series of correspondence also includes letters from romantic interests of Emma. The third sub-series of professional correspondence is from galleries and museums, requesting paintings or updating Emma about her current and past exhibitions.

Series 2 contains personal items and writings of Emma’s, including a diary, travel logs, a scrapbook, address books, and a local cookbook from a Rockport church.

Series 3 comprises of family history information about Emma, her parents, and each of her parents’ ancestors. This includes family trees, hand-written questionnaires filled out by Emma, and newspaper announcements of family marriages and deaths. Additionally, there is information about the Kissel family car business, which is the family Emma’s daughter Alice married into.

Series 4 is a wealth of legal information, including several family members’ wills, power of attorney, land grants, and Emma’s divorce from her first husband. Many of the legal documents include correspondence about the legal process of different wills and cases, which I have included in this series. The correspondence included provides the reader with the legal correspondence associated with each case, the steps that were taken during the legal process, and, in some cases, the personal thought process behind them.

Series 5 has some slightly disjointed financial information, such as a few checks and a warranty, in addition to some family investment information.

The photographs of Series 7 range from Emma as a young girl to photographs of her grandson, Stephen Kissel. This includes two photo albums, several photographs, and photocopies of photographs. Few are dated or labeled, but the viewer can discern some information about those pictured, such as a family picture of Emma, her daughter, and her parents circa 1916.

Series 8 contains books that belonged to earlier generations of Emma’s family. Series 9 contains several objects, including pieces of embroidery given to Emma and her brother, Addison, from both grandmothers as well as objects with an earlier family history.
Series Description

I. Correspondence (1857-1976)
   I. Family Correspondence, 1857-1976
   II. Friends and Acquaintances to Emma Fordyce MacRae Correspondence, 1920-1973
   III. Professional Correspondence to Emma Fordyce MacRae, 1917-1969

II. Personal (1900-1927, undated)

III. Biographical and Family History (1874-1969, undated)

IV. Legal (1850-1974, undated)

V. Financial (1898-1939)

VI. Professional Ephemera (1926-2008)

VII. Photographs, undated

VIII. Books, undated

IX. Objects, undated

Container List

Box 1

I. Series I: Correspondence
   I. Family Correspondence, 1857
   II. Family Correspondence, 1900-1922
   III. Family Correspondence, 1922-1933, undated
   IV. Copies of family correspondence, 1915-1922
   V. Correspondence, to Mrs. J.A. (Alice Dean) Fordyce, 1876-1926
   VI. Correspondence, to John A. Fordyce, 1903, 1915
   VII. Correspondence, to Dr. J.A. Fordyce, 1915-1925
   VIII. Correspondence, to Dr. J.A. Fordyce, regarding career, 1912-1914
   IX. Correspondence, to Addison Fordyce, 1915
   X. Correspondence, regarding Addison Fordyce, 1915
   XI. Correspondence, regarding Addison Fordyce, 1918 and undated
   XII. Correspondence, from Stephen Kissel, 1943-1957
   XIII. Correspondence, from Stephen Kissel, 1960-1971, undated
   XIV. Kissel Family Correspondence, 1971-1976, undated
   XV. Correspondence, to Emma F. MacRae, 1930-1939
   XVI. Correspondence, to Emma F. MacRae, 1947-1973, undated
   XVII. Correspondence, from Benjamin Earl Appleton, 1920-1921
XVIII. Correspondence, from A.W. Burnett, 1920

Box 2

I. Series I: Correspondence
   I. Correspondence, from A.W. Burnett, 1920
   II. Correspondence, from A.W. Burnett, 1921
   III. Correspondence, from A.W. Burnett, 1921, undated
   IV. Professional Correspondence, to Emma F. MacRae, 1917-1928
   V. Professional Correspondence, to Emma F. MacRae, 1928-1969, undated

II. Series II: Personal
   I. Diary, Emma Dean Fordyce, 1900
   II. Diary, travel log, Emma Dean Fordyce, 1905
   III. Travel logs, 1911, 1921, 1914, 1926, undated
   IV. Scrapbook, Emma F. MacRae, undated
   V. Address books, undated

Box 3

I. Series II: Personal
   I. Copy of Address book, undated
   II. Name cards and invitations, Emma F. MacRae, 1927, undated
   III. Rockport Cookbook, St. Mary’s Episcopal Church

II. Series III: Biographical and Family History
   I. Family Tree, undated
   II. Biographical and family records, 1898-1899, undated
   III. Biographical information, Smith family, undated
   IV. Biographical information, Thompson Dean, 1891
   V. Biographical information, Fordyce family, 1969
   VI. Biographical, Dr. J.A. Fordyce, published 1925
   VII. Emma Fordyce MacRae, biographical, 1927-1941, undated
   VIII. Newspaper, marriage and death announcements, 1874-1925, undated
   IX. Marriage announcement, Alice Dean and J.A. Fordyce, 1886
   X. Marriage announcement and certificate, Emma Fordyce MacRae, 1910
   XI. Marriage service and materials, Emma Fordyce MacRae and Dr. Homer Swift, 1922
   XII. Dr. J. A. Fordyce, death certificate, 1925
   XIII. Marriage certificate, Alice MacRae and Lester Kissel, 1934
   XIV. Newspaper articles, Dr. Homer Swift, 1953, undated
   XV. Letterhead, Fordyce crest, undated
   XVI. Cemetery map, 1914
   XVII. Kissel car materials, 1917-1961
III. Series IV: Legal
   I. Will, James Smith, undated
   II. Federal land grant, 1850
   III. Robert Burlan, Certificate of the Register of the Land, 1858
   IV. Land purchase, 1873
   V. Legation papers, 1887
   VI. Larchmont manor, Company deed, 1887
   VII. Thompson Dean, will and estate papers, 1894-1903
   VIII. Alice Dean Fordyce, Dean family estate papers and correspondence, 1890-1904
   IX. Inventory of Larchmont residence, 1905
   X. Legal correspondence about MacRae divorce, 1917-1921
   XI. Court papers, MacRae divorce, 1920
   XII. Wills, 1925, 1926
   XIII. Legal documents concerning the wills, 1927-1928
   XIV. Power of Attorney, 1928
   XV. Alice Dean Fordyce, instrument of trust, July 18, 1934
   XVI. Emma Fordyce MacRae, legal correspondence, 1953, 1968
   XVII. Legal documents, settling will of Emma F. Swift, 1974

Box 4

I. Series V: Financial
   I. Investment information, 1898-1927, undated
   II. Financial, receipts, checks, etc., 1907-1941
   III. Estate finances, unknown family member, 1911-1915
   IV. Warranty information, 1922
   V. Emma Fordyce MacRae, tracking painting sales, 1922-1939
   VI. Cash book, 1926-1929

II. Series VI: Professional Ephemera
   I. Membership, society papers, 1926-1939, undated
   II. Emma Fordyce MacRae, publication features, 1929
   III. Certificates, 1963, undated
   IV. Exhibition materials, Emma Fordyce MacRae, undated
   V. Posthumous Exhibitions, 1983-2008
   VI. Exhibition catalogs and materials, 1920-1939
   VII. Exhibition catalogs and materials, 1939-1977

III. Series VII: Photographs
   I. Photographs, family, undated
   II. Photocopies, family photographs, undated
   III. Photo album, undated
   IV. Photographs, Cook family land, labeled, undated
   V. Photographs, travel, undated
VI. Photographs, family homes and interiors, undated

IV. Series VIII: Books
   I. Note found with the books, undated

Box 5
   I. Oversized
      I. Objects have been pulled from their series in the regular sized boxes and replaced with “Document Removed” documentation that will guide researchers to the Oversized Box, including:
          I. Family Tree
          II. Greenwood Cemetery map
          III. 1873 Land purchase
          IV. 1850 Land grant
          V. 1887 Legation papers
          VI. 1858 Land certification
          VII. Larchmont Co. deed
          VIII. Photography
          IX. April 15, 1929, Town & Country (MacRae painting featured on the cover)

Box 6
   I. Series IX: Objects—to be moved to Main Complex, Lower Level, Storage Room 2
      I. Embroidery from grandmothers on both sides of her family made for her and her brother
      II. Knife and cover
      III. Wood from a hammer from MacRae’s mother’s side (great, great, great grandfather), labeled
      IV. Small metal frame with a picture of MacRae’s brother, Addison Fordyce, in his WWI uniform
      V. WWI field service medal