

= Susanna Paine =

Susanna Paine , also known as Susannah and Susan (June 9 , 1792 ? November 10 , 1862) , was an American portrait artist in New England in the 19th century . She published poetry , a Christmas hymn , a novel , and an autobiography entitled *Roses and Thorns , or Recollections of an Artist* .

As a young girl she was an excellent student , but needed to quit school at the age of 11 to care for her ill grandmother . At 15 , she taught school and a year later joined an academy in Providence , Rhode Island , where she earned her way through school by making and selling needlework . She graduated with highest honors and established a school that she operated for years . Paine gave the profits her family , and she helped support them throughout most of her life .

She had a short marriage characterized by abuse and control . A child was born to the couple , but died 11 months later . Before the child 's birth , Paine had left her husband and obtained a divorce . To support herself , she taught school for a period and then began to work as a portraitist . She traveled throughout Rhode Island , Massachusetts , and Maine accepting commissions for portraits of individuals or families from 1826 through 1862 . Because she lived a mobile lifestyle , she had few long @-@ lasting relationships . The closest personal relationship of her life was with her mother . She raised a girl , however , for three years and taught her how to paint . Once she became a professional portraitist she had periods of financial security , but that and her physical health vacillated over the course of her career .

= = Early life = =

Susanna Paine , born in Rehoboth , Massachusetts on June 9 , 1792 , was the second child of James Paine (b . 1764 @-@ 65) and Mary Chaffee Paine (1767 @-@ 1849) . Her father was a mariner . When she was a young girl , he was lost at sea . She then lived with her maternal grandparents , Reverend Jonathan Chaffee and Mary Chaffee . Paine , an excellent student , attended school until she was 11 years of age , when she was needed to help care for her ill grandmother . The following year she nearly died as the result of a lightning strike that killed the person standing beside her . Believed to have died , she resumed consciousness after one hour , but suffered from seizures for several years after the incident . Her mother married widower Nathaniel Thurber on April 9 , 1808 , and the combined household , including his four children , moved to a Foster , Rhode Island farm .

At 15 years of age , Paine taught school and then attended " the best Academy in Rhode Island " , which she financed through the sales of her needlework . Paine learned how to paint with watercolor at the academy and graduated with the highest honors ; she was sufficiently trained " to teach any of the common branches of education . " Upon graduation Paine established a school near her mother and stepfather 's house . The profits she made from the school were given to her mother and on one occasion loaned to her stepfather .

Reluctantly , and at her mother 's insistence , she married James Phillips on November 4 , 1819 . Her husband ? a gambler ? was abusive , tyrannical and cruel . According to Paine , she left her husband after " one year and two months of cruel bondage " . Paine returned to her mother 's house and three months later gave birth to her son on August 30 , 1821 . The child , Theodore Winthrop Phillips , died 11 months later . The Rhode Island Supreme Court granted Paine a divorce from her husband in 1821 or 1823 . Paine was left destitute , having received no alimony and having relinquished property that she previously owned to her husband .

Paine resumed teaching and painted portraits to supplement her earnings , allowing her to support herself and send money to her mother , stepfather and their family , who had moved to Connecticut . To this point her life had been one of turmoil and financial precariousness . Rather than marry another man to secure a better standard of living , she developed a career so that she could support herself .

I was very diligent : toiling incessantly at my easel , until the picture was finished : when I viewed it with great complacency , (artist like) and called Mrs. R. , my patron and landlady , to look at it for

the first time . She entered with an anxious , doubting look ? but at the first glance she started back , in surprise ? then fell into perfect rapture , declaring it was " most excellent " ... The next day , the house was " inundated " with callers . They entered my " sanctum " with eager looks , to see whither [sic] ? a woman could paint a likeness ? When lo , they all applauded , beyond my most sanguine hopes ? or expectations .

= = Artist = =

Paine worked as a professional portrait painter by traveling through New England and placing advertisements in local newspapers to solicit business . She and Ruth Henshaw Bascom were two of 11 or more women who worked as professional itinerant portratists in the late 18th and early 19th centuries .

In many ways , her [Paine 's] career typified the itinerant portraitist in the early nineteenth @-@ century United States . Her anxiety over commissions , the constant threat of poverty and corresponding need for mobility in search of work , would have been familiar to contemporary American painters both male and female .

Paine was " a woman of stalwart proportions , weighing over 200 pounds , and was a very original character ... " She was also described as a idealist . Paine was subject to criticism for traveling alone as a woman , but found it was safe to stay in boarding houses , secured through " several letters of introduction " from trusted people . To establish herself as a " genteel " artist , she studied art at the Boston Athenæum , stayed at upscale boarding houses , and became a published writer .

Throughout her career , Paine generally made oil paintings on 1 / 2 inch wood panels of which the sides and back were washed in red , gray @-@ green , or green @-@ blue . The subjects of the paintings were often portrayed in a confident manner in half @-@ length poses . Their accessories , hair , and clothing were often " elaborately detailed " . The placement of hands , tables , and other objects could be awkward . She had a tendency to paint the sitters with long hands , light flesh tones , doelike eyes and round faces . Paine was known to take liberties in the portrayal of her subjects ; she once painted a gray @-@ eyed man 's portrait with black eyes because she thought they were more attractive .

= = = Maine = = =

She traveled alone for the first time in 1826 to Portland , Maine and placed a business advertisement in the December 12 edition of the Portland Advertiser . The standard rate for large oil portraits at that time was US \$ 20 ? \$ 30 , but Paine advertised \$ 8 for large portraits . Not having received any leads for work , she placed a January ad with a testimonial , which said that her portrait 's were a good likeness of the subject and well executed ? and that women might find " a pride and pleasure in patronizing a female artist . " Once she made a painting for her landlady and neighbors saw it , she began to receive commissions for her work .

Paine worked in southern Maine , Portland , and New Hampshire in 1827 and 1828 . Initially , she had sufficient commissions to support the rental of a furnished parlor , an office for painting , and another office to exhibit her portraits . A religious woman , Paine adopted simpler clothing as a spiritual practice during this time . As her health declined , she engaged nursing services , which left her short of funds . Paine answered a friend 's request to return to Providence to paint her dying daughter , and still in poor health , stayed there several months .

Paine worked as an artist in Maine until about 1831 . One of her subjects while in Portland was George Morillo Bartol , her portrait of him sold for US \$ 38 @, @ 513 on March 6 , 2011 .

= = = Massachusetts = = =

She received formal art training at the Boston Athenæum around 1832 and spent the following summer in Cape Ann . Paine , one of the first artists to paint on Cape Ann , returned for several years , interrupted by visits to her mother each spring and fall . She was in the village of Annisquam

on Cape Ann by 1834 , when she painted portraits of families . Paine continued to paint on the cape during the 1830s and 1840s . She found it to be a unique place :

The scenery was delightful ; and the people just to my liking ... No one was very rich , and no one very poor ; they all seemed on an equality ... Kindness , benevolence and good will , were the most prominent traits of their lives , and characters .

She raised a girl , who she called her adopted daughter , from 12 to 15 years of age . During that time Paine taught her to paint and they lived for a few months in Fall River , Massachusetts . During a visit to her mother and stepfather 's farm , she found that her younger half @-@ brother , Nathaniel , had secured the deed to the farm and lived in the main house ; her parents lived in " a sort of out @-@ house " . Months later , after her half @-@ brother sold the farm , Paine found them " looking sad and dejected " with Nathaniel in South Killingly , Connecticut and made arrangements for her mother and step @-@ father to live in an apartment .

= = = Rhode Island = = =

In 1830 , Paine painted the portrait of author , Catharine R. Williams , who wrote poetry , Religion at Home , and the Lives of William Barton and Stephen Olney . The portrait was given to the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1885 from a group of members of the society , including Henry J. Steere . From about 1836 , she had a residence in Providence , Rhode Island and kept her parents in " comfortable support " . Between 1836 and 1838 , she wrote and published a Christmas hymn and poetry . She enjoyed a successful professional life until 1842 when she left town for her safety during the Dorr Rebellion . She went to Cape Ann and after a few months returned to Providence . She became ill and , unable to find work in both places , suffered financially . Her mother came to live with her in Providence following the death of her stepfather , Nathaniel Thurber , in November , 1848 . The following March , her mother Mary died during a visit to her half @-@ brother who then lived in Hartford , Connecticut . She had supported her parents since she was a teenaged girl .

= = = Later years = = =

Paine traveled through Maine , where she had difficulty establishing herself for want of connections that she had relied upon in the past , so she returned to Providence and for the first time established herself in a highly respectable commercial building with , aside from herself , only male occupants . She struggled professionally and , because of the loss of her mother , she suffered personally . The career that she relied upon kept her forever traveling , which had made it difficult to establish long @-@ standing relationships . Her relationship with her mother was the only close one of her life .

She published her autobiography , Roses and Thorns , or Recollections of an Artist in 1854 . Six years later she published Wait and See , a Victorian novel . She died in Providence , Rhode Island on November 10 , 1862 .

A file containing papers , photographs , exhibition catalogs and other archival material is held at the Brooklyn Museum Libraries & Archives and the Frick Art Reference Library of the Frick Collection .

= = Collections = =

Cape Ann Museum , Gloucester , Massachusetts
Maine State Museum , Augusta , Maine
Portland Museum of Art , Maine
Rhode Island Historical Society , Providence , Rhode Island

= = Works = =

Sally Ellery Ryerson Merchant , oil on canvas , c . 1825 @-@ 1835 , Cape Ann Historical Association

Catherine Read Arnold Williams , oil on wood , c . 1830 John Brown House Museum , Rhode Island

Historical Society

Eliza and Sheldon Battey and their son Thomas Sheldon Battey , Providence , Rhode Island , oil on wood , 1830 , private collection

George Morillo Bartol , pastel on paper , 1827

Portrait of Mrs. J. H. Corbett , oil on panel , 1832 , Portland Museum of Art , Maine

Gideon Lane , III , oil on wood , 1833 , Cape Ann Historical Association

Hannah Griffin Lane , oil , 1833 , Cape Ann Historical Association

Eliza Harper Peabody Lane , oil on wood , 1833 , Cape Ann Historical Association

Hannah Fuller Smith Stanwood , oil , 1834 , Cape Ann Historical Association

Lucy Kinsman Brown Davis , oil on wood , c . 1835 , Cape Ann Historical Association

The Oldridge Family , four oil on wood panel portraits , 1839 , private collection

Portrait of a Lady in a Lace Cap , oil , Portland Museum of Art