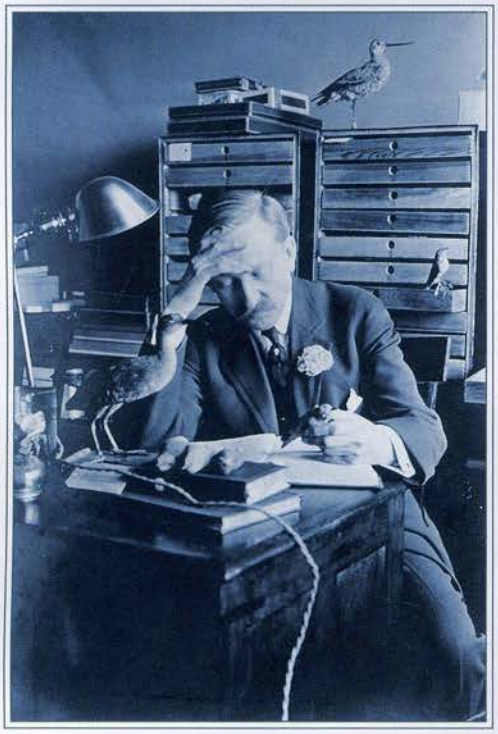


Thomas and (Mary) Emma Roberts, their younger brother John Walter, and their parents, John and Elizabeth Sadler Roberts, moved to Minnesota in 1867 when the state was relatively raw and unformed. Thomas was nine and Emma, seven. Their father was modestly wealthy from real estate ventures in his native Philadelphia, but he suffered from tuberculosis. As the disease advanced, doctors advised him to seek relief in the fresh air of the Upper Midwest. He brought his young family to Minneapolis where he embarked on a healthful regime of outdoor activity, undertaking walks or long buggy rides into the countryside. John Roberts had a keen interest in natural history, and Thomas developed his love of birds on these excursions. Father and son carried an old muzzle-loading gun for collecting specimens to take home and identify.[2]

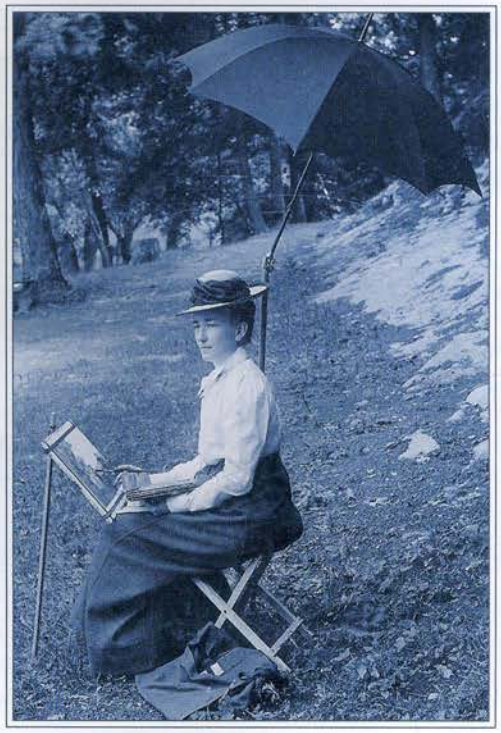
Less frequently, Emma accompanied her father on his jaunts. She was more interested in the wildflowers growing in profusion along roadsides and in remnant woods and prairie. Her interest in birds was domestic—she tended a pet, which laid an egg that Thomas acquired.[3]

A Tale of Two Siblings

Sue Leaf

In his 1877 valedictory speech to his classmates at Minneapolis High School, Thomas Sadler Roberts earnestly entreated the audience to pay attention to the "endless beauty and richness" of nature, which "brings more contentedness and satisfaction than relentless pursuit of wealth." Local birds were "gorgeously arrayed" and largely ignored. "Celebrated paintings . . . are objects of admiration and praise," he added, "but for beauty through and through, we must turn to works of nature."[1]

Sitting in the audience, his younger sister, Emma, appreciated the sentiment though she was more likely to seek beauty in nature's delicate flowers than the myriad birds flitting overhead. But brother and sister embodied the refined sensibilities of their Quaker forebears, which frequently combined a love of nature with an impulse toward social responsibility. Genteel to a fault, the siblings would, nonetheless, step outside expected norms of behavior in their search for beauty and the ways to convey this appreciation to others.



The family's wealth freed John from a work schedule. It also allowed him to buy a comfortable home with a veranda, garden, and a barn for their horse at Utah (now Eighth) Street and First Avenue North, on the edge of Minneapolis's business district. Large bur oaks shaded the lawn. The family employed a cook and a "girl" and, because of John's health, a handyman who did yard work.

In the spring of 1874, 16-year-old Thomas began a bird journal. He recorded birds he saw or collected and other tidbits of ornithological interest. Minneapolis was rife with birds then. Migrating ducks covered the surface of Lake Calhoun in spring and fall; flocks of shorebirds in the hundreds visited favorite stop-over sites on prairie remnants near the city. With the muzzle loader, he went after interesting specimens: a northern shrike in the tamarack swamp "at the foot of the Bluffs"; passenger pigeons (to eat) on the shore of Lake Johanna.[4]

Roaming the countryside in his teens, Thomas also became conversant with Minnesota's plant life. He and like-minded friends were skilled enough to contribute to the official list of plants being compiled at the time by Warren Upham for the state's survey of flora.[5]

The children attended Jefferson School at Tenth Street and Harmon Place, walking four blocks to classes. Emma was often taken aback by her older brother's courtliness as he opened Jefferson's heavy door for her and stood aside to let her precede him. The neighborhood was alive with children, and some of the friendships that Thomas and Emma forged at the wooden double desks of Jefferson lasted their lifetimes. Emma's close friends included Caroline Bovey, the oldest of six, whose father was in the lumber business, and Jennie Cleveland, whose father owned a foundry on the road leading to Fort Snelling.[6]

Both Thomas and Emma were friends with the Kingman kids—Joseph and Susan—and as the children grew into their teens, they were all part of a social set, the Galaxy Club. The Galaxy met weekly, and in the winter of 1878 put on an original play with a cast of 16. Often, though, play practice got preempted by music and an evening of "much bodily exercise in the way of dancing," Thomas confessed.[7] The Galaxy was *the* place to be when Thomas and Joe Kingman were freshmen at the University of Minnesota.

FACING: *Thomas Sadler Roberts in the bird room at the University of Minnesota's zoology building, about 1916. Emma Roberts at her easel on a trip to the East, 1890s.*

Roberts family, probably 1867. Seated: parents John and Elizabeth, along with Emma; Thomas stands behind Emma and John Walter at his mother's side.

Thomas studied two years there and then left in 1882 to pursue a medical degree at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. The Roberts's wealth was not sufficient to allow him a life of leisure; he would need an income. It is not known whether Emma completed high school. Young women of her social set were sent East to experience "finishing," including theater, concerts, and balls. Emma spent several winters with her aunts in Baltimore and Havre de Grace, Maryland, and Philadelphia but generally not for long periods of time.[8]

Emma attracted suitors, particularly friends of Thomas. Only one letter of hers remains. In 1880 she wrote to Thomas of one man calling on her and requesting she play Haydn on the piano ("Haydn," she confided, "is far beyond me."); attending a band concert at Lake Minnetonka with another; and receiving a letter from Joe Kingman. But her big news for Thomas was that Jennie Cleveland, evidently a person of interest to him, was returning from Chicago. She closed the letter with a domestic message: "Mama wants to know what you did with your satchel."[9]

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Arethusa, one of the wildflower watercolors Emma gave to Thomas

In 1879, when Emma was 20, Joe Kingman wrote to Thomas, alluding to a wedding engagement of Emma's that he had seen in the newspaper. Joe goaded Thomas about an announcement of his own—the two had made social calls together, visiting friends, particularly women. Thomas's engagement would not come for another six years, and there was never another reference in Roberts family writings to a match for Emma. In May 1881 she returned home from a seven-month visit to the East Coast and began art lessons in Minneapolis. It was the first indication from family letters that she was seriously interested in art.[10]

While in medical school, Thomas could not afford to travel home at Christmas. In 1883 Emma made the trip to him. The siblings met at their aunt's home in Baltimore, shopped for presents downtown, and enjoyed time with their favorite cousins. With relatives in Havre de Grace, they viewed "tableaux at City Hall" that they both found "rather crude in character," Thomas wrote, but "enjoyed it all the more for this very reason."[11]

Emma had brought along her original watercolors of Minnesota wildflowers, possibly a Christmas gift for Thomas. The flowers were painted on heavy, large-scale paper but were themselves rather small and painstakingly rendered. Thomas, an accomplished botanist after many summers of collecting plants in the field, thought they were quite good. He showed them to botanists in Philadelphia who praised them for their accuracy. "I felt much pleased at this commendation of sister's work," Thomas wrote. Later in the winter,

Judges selected Emma's wildflower watercolors to hang in the Minnesota Building at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

he showed the paintings to his friend Agnes Williams, who also had an interest in both watercolor and wildflowers. Agnes would eventually add her own paintings to the series.[12]

THOMAS REJOINED THE FAMILY IN 1886 after completing his medical degree and a year's residency in Philadelphia. He was now engaged to Emma's friend Jennie Cleveland. Thomas was 28, Emma 27. Their younger brother, John Walter, had become a traveling salesman and would henceforth spend limited time in Minneapolis. Thomas assumed medical care for their aging parents, but day-to-day oversight of the household fell to Emma.[13]

From her father's journals we know that Emma was social. She was active in parish life at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, stayed with friends at Lake Minnetonka during the summer heat, and went out with the Sketching Club of Minneapolis. She attended the theater and balls—specifically, the Masonic gala opening of its new temple at Sixth Street and Hennepin Avenue. Having eluded interested suitors, Emma now socialized mainly with family or with other single women. One of these was Florence Wales, a Minneapolis native and daughter of a territorial settler, William W. Wales. Florence was a watercolorist who by 1890 spent summers painting in Gloucester, Massachusetts, and taking art lessons in New York City.[14]

After her father died from tuberculosis in 1890, Emma's burdens lessened. She and her mother rented the family home, visited Florence Wales in Gloucester, and then went to New York City. They rented a flat in Manhattan, and Emma took art lessons from watercolorist Rhoda Holmes Nicholls. The Robertses also sublet rooms to Florence Wales, her sister Nellie, and another Minneapolis woman.[15]

All four younger women were involved with an art organization that they referred to as "the League," most

Minnesota Building at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893

likely the Art Students League of New York, a vigorous and somewhat informal school that attracted both amateurs and professional artists. The league listed prominent artists on its faculty. For at least two winters, 1892 and 1893, Emma and her friends attended classes there, painted china (possibly for necessary income), worked in studio, and strolled the many art galleries of the city. In her journal, Elizabeth Roberts, chaperone to the unmarried women, recorded nights at the theater, walks in Central Park, shopping outings, and the trials of retaining domestic help.[16]

Emma and Florence gained recognition. They were invited to hang their work in shows at the New York City Water Color Club, Philadelphia's Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and the Cleveland Art Association. Back in Minnesota, judges selected Emma's wildflower watercolors to hang in the Minnesota Building at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. There, the paintings held their own against a collection of herbarium-pressed, actual flowers that were also displayed. In fact, the chief of the exposition's Anthropological Building requested that the watercolors be hung there for a time, where they attracted wider attention and secured an award for Emma. The paintings nearly missed the exposition altogether, though. They belonged to Thomas, and he was leery of lending them out.[17]

In October 1893, Emma and Florence rented a studio in downtown Minneapolis's New York Life Insurance Company building, where they painted and taught. They initiated a series of studio teas on Tuesday afternoons. Guests stopped by to view their workspace and gallery of paintings by them and their students. Water was heated in a samovar, and the scent of strong tea was enhanced by mood-setting zither music emanating from behind a screen.[18] New York Life was a new and ritzy building. On the corner of Fifth Street and Second Avenue, it was close to the county courthouse and, as a consequence, housed many lawyers. Among them was childhood friend Joe Kingman, now a rising attorney, recently married with a young child. He was both Thomas and Emma Roberts's legal consultant.

Emma furthered her expertise on trips to the East. In 1895 she summered on the Atlantic coast, studying under Irving Wiles, a leading artist with a particular affinity for beach scenes, and Childe Hassan, who was gaining fame as an American Impressionist and had a definite flair for vibrant color. Perhaps it was Hassan who influenced Emma's award-winning watercolor of chrysanthemums, *In November*. The painting, which the *Minneapolis Tribune* considered a "royal piece of color," was originally exhibited in 1899 at a Minneapolis Art League show. The judges noted its "breadth and handling and arrangement of color." *In November* later hung at the American Water Color Society in New York, Philadelphia Art Club, Chicago Art Institute, and the Greater America Exposition in Omaha.[19]

Thomas Roberts at home on Fourth Avenue South, about 1898

WHILE EMMA ESTABLISHED HERSELF as a professional artist, Thomas built his medical practice. A solid core of patients were in flour milling, including the Crosbys, Bells, and Washburns, or were Jefferson School mates, like the Boveys. In the 1890s Dr. Roberts, now married and the father of three, practiced out of a small office in his residence at 1603 Fourth Avenue South. Emma lived around the corner with their mother, at 409 East Sixteenth Street. He made house calls by horse and buggy most mornings and not a few evenings. Office hours occupied the afternoon. The practice thrived and Roberts was frantically busy—but not too busy to discuss birds with patients.[20]

In 1893, while state officials prepared Emma's wildflower paintings for the Columbian Exposition, Thomas began collecting birds for the Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota. This was before trained scientists dominated the field but, even today, skilled amateurs contribute to ornithology. Taking vacation time, he collected at Heron Lake, an immense wetlands in southwestern Minnesota. In 1894 he assumed the title of ornithologist for the survey (an unpaid position) and spent two weeks taking breeding birds in the Lake Vermilion area of northern Minnesota. He made study skins of birds he collected; these would form the foundation of the state's natural-history museum holdings. He already had thousands of skins in his personal collection, begun in his teens.[21]

Later in the 1890s the Roberts siblings, self-confident and not overly concerned with social status, sought new endeavors. Emma took paid work, becoming the assistant director of drawing for the Minneapolis public schools. Thomas bought a camera and pioneered in wildlife photography. Both changes reflected the siblings' latent interest in education and provided the means for sharing their passions with a wider public.

Emma was a trailblazer in assuming a career outside the home. Rarely did women of her class work for pay. Emma, though, was specifically trained, and her skills were appropriately feminine.[22] It is likely that her inheritance was not enough to allow her to live independently, keep domestic help, and travel, which she had begun to do.

In this pre-copy-machine era, drawing was a necessary skill for school children. Emma assisted Bonnie Snow, who mentored her, laying the foundation for Emma's career as an educator. When Snow resigned in 1904, Emma became head of the program. She would blossom in the job and expand its scope as she grew in appreciation of the value of art education.[23]

Photography was both a craft and an art that required extraordinary patience. Having a camera allowed Thomas to study living birds and use his shotgun less. He turned his lens on a colony of Franklin's gulls at Heron Lake, admiring the "beautiful rose hue" of the gull's underparts and breathless over the "thrilling performance" of its aerial display.[24] Thomas was particularly interested in producing slides for magic-lantern shows, depicting the beauty of birds in a new way. To enhance their effect, magic-lantern slides were usually colored by hand; Thomas, a perfectionist requiring meticulous reproduction of plumage color, entrusted the work to Emma.

These exquisite slides thrilled attendees at the 1899 American Ornithologists Union meeting in Philadelphia. One attendee enthused, "Dr. Roberts' views [slides] of the Franklin's Gull story were simply astonishing and his story captivating." Encouraged by the praise and also by *Bird Lore* magazine, a new means of showing his work, Thomas devoted many hours to photographing nests, nestlings, birds in action, and landscapes of a disappearing Minnesota wilderness.[25]

WHEN ELIZABETH ROBERTS DIED IN 1903, opportunities expanded again for Emma. In 1904 she founded the Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis, a collaboration of artists that promoted art education, provided space for working artists, and promoted the values of the Arts

Thomas Roberts, his camera on a makeshift platform, photographing a flycatcher's nest at Heron Lake, 1899. Tom Miller holds the ladder.

and Crafts movement. These values were a response to the dramatic depersonalization that began with the Industrial Revolution a half-century before. The Arts and Crafts movement championed handcrafted items that were functional and enhanced the beauty of everyday life. In the United States, there was an added emphasis on regionalism. The Prairie School architectural movement was a reflection of this philosophy.[26]

Through her work in the public schools, Emma saw a need for classes to train teachers to teach art. She launched the guild to meet that need, but it was also a means by which she could further her vision of art permeating everyday life. She served as its president for most of the organization's existence (1906–17).

Most Handicraft Guild members were women. It subtly promoted collaboration rather than hierarchical governance and reached out to draw in amateurs as well as established artists. The guild's flexible sense of mission changed as the needs and interests of the larger community changed. Although these were feminist ideals in an age when women had become acutely aware of their status in society and were organizing for the right to vote, there is no indication that Emma ever characterized herself in such socially activist terms.

The guild held its first "Summer School of Design Applied to Crafts" in 1905 and attracted the highly regarded designer Ernest Batchelder of Throop Polytechnic (now Caltech) to lead it. Among the teachers on staff was Florence Willets, a potter from Chicago. Florence hailed from a family of artists; her sister Anita was a watercolor painter married to Chicago architect Alfred Burnham, nephew of architect Daniel Burnham who designed the 1893 Columbian Exposition. In time, Florence would become the life companion to Emma, and she served as the guild's vice-president during Emma's tenure as president. Florence Wales was the longtime secretary-treasurer. The summer school quickly gained national recognition.

So rapid was the success of the Handicraft Guild that it soon outgrew its initial location. In 1906 it moved to 89 South Tenth Street in downtown Minneapolis. Old friend Joe Kingman, now a prominent lawyer, put up the capital for construction. The three-story brick building, still standing, was studded with beautiful handcrafted features: fireplaces with ceramic tiles and burnished copper hoods, light fixtures of art glass and metal filigree, wall sconces with peacocks and tree motifs. A tearoom and sales area were on street level. A large second-floor auditorium with dark beams and vaulted ceiling seated between three and four hundred.

Handicraft Guild building, Minneapolis, about 1909

The following decade was a heady one for Emma. She and Florence Willets attended several International Art Congresses in Europe: London in 1908, Dresden, Berlin, and Munich in 1910, and Dresden again in 1912, this time accompanied by Thomas's 22-year-old daughter. On one trip, Emma collected Rembrandt reproductions for the schools and brought home several thousand small pictures of masterpieces for use by classroom teachers. At the 1912 Dresden congress, she was the only American woman to address the attendees, speaking on the underlying principles of teaching art in the schools. She visited the great cathedrals in England and Scotland, toured Greece, Constantinople, and Budapest, and strolled the museums of Vienna, Prague, and Berlin.[27]

At home, she commissioned Minneapolis Arts and Crafts architect Edwin Hawley Hewitt to design a house for her. He sited it at 14 East Fifty-First Street, near Minnehaha Creek in what became known as Tangletown but was then on the edge of the city. The compact stuccoed house was decorated with handcrafted ceramic tiles by Ernest Batchelder. Tiles studding an outside retaining wall bore the imprint of fantastical birds with topknots and long tails.[28] Emma moved into the house in 1913. It was the first time she had not lived close to her immediate family. She was 54.

Retaining wall tile

WHILE EMMA FLOURISHED IN HER WORK with the schools and at the guild, Thomas had put his beloved bird work on hold as the demands of his medical practice intensified. His collection parties under the auspices of the state's natural history survey, such as forays into northwestern Minnesota in 1900 and 1901, became a thing of the past. He stayed closer to home and, by 1907, took very little time off. He had developed a high profile in obstetrics and would not relinquish patients, who were often also social friends, to another physician. One memorable summer, 1905, he delivered nine infants, six in June alone.[29]

The pressures took a toll. Suffering from overwork, he spent a month on the Gulf Coast in 1905 and, in 1913, four weeks in Bermuda, recovering from exhaustion. Finally, believing that he would not live beyond threescore years and ten—his male Roberts ancestors had died around 70—he closed his medical practice, except for about 25 families who kept him on retainer.[30]

In June 1915 Thomas took an unpaid job as associate curator of the Museum of Natural History at the University of Minnesota (forerunner of the Bell Museum of Natural History). In addition, he was named professor of ornithology in the animal biology department, also unpaid. Roberts was 57. A select group of benefactors, mainly patients, raised funds for his collection trips. They were nonplussed by him, though, expressing admiration for his "rather eccentric makeup."[31]

The museum got a new home in 1916 when the zoology department moved into a spacious new building on the southwest corner of Washington Avenue and Church Street. Its third floor was designed to house the natural history collection. By title, Roberts was second in command, but in actuality he functioned as director. He and the museum's chief donor, James Ford Bell, a former patient and executive of the Washburn-Crosby Company, planned out several dioramas displaying large mammals in their natural habitat. One with woodland caribou, already completed, moved to the new building. New York muralist Charles Corwin was hired to paint backgrounds. Work on a display of bighorn sheep soon began, and a diorama of beavers, nearly extirpated from Minnesota, was planned. Roberts saw the museum as a chance to raise the awareness of the general public. "It is for everybody to see and enjoy and learn about the interesting wild things that are disappearing or getting too remote to be easily found," he declared. "We want the people of Minnesota to come to our new museum."[32]

The museum also served as the scientific assemblage of representative types of animals in Minnesota. Roberts's 6,000 skins from the 1870s were added to the bird collection. Protected by wooden cases, they took up

Thomas and Jennie Roberts at Itasca State Park, about 1917

"It is for everybody to see and enjoy and learn about the interesting wild things that are disappearing or getting too remote to be easily found. We want the people of Minnesota to come to our new museum."

considerable space. He had housed them in a storeroom at the Handicraft Guild building until the museum gave them a home.[33]

Initially reluctant, Roberts warmed to the task of teaching ornithology. The first class consisted of six students—five young women and a man. In April and May, Roberts took them outdoors with their binoculars every class period it did not rain (or snow). He frequently used Emma's house in Tangletown as a base from which they could walk to Washburn Park (site of present-day Washburn High School) and then to Pearl Lake, a delightful little marsh, and thence along Minnehaha Creek back to Emma's. She hosted the small classes to simple suppers. A lecture by the professor followed the meal. His wife Jennie, Emma's girlhood friend, often accompanied them.[34]

Roberts was now Minnesota's premier spokesman for natural history. Most of his students were destined to teach public school. After graduation, they carried their enthusiasm for what they learned from Roberts out into Minnesota's small towns, organizing nature-study groups and small nature museums for their students and inviting their former professor to talk to civic groups and show his slides.

As her brother gained his footing as a teacher, Emma broadened the public schools' scope of art education. She adopted the slogan "Art for *Life's* Sake," rather than "Art for Art's Sake" and spoke eloquently of the need for children to learn how to see the world about them. "If children paint snow, flowers or anything else in nature," she explained, "they look at them differently the next time they see them." She took groups of children on guided tours of the tapestry collection in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and claimed that exposure to great works of art had a civilizing effect on unruly students, a comment that garnered her an inaccurate but memorable headline in the *Minneapolis Tribune*: "Mona Lisa's Smile Just Melts Badness Out of the Bad Boy."[35]

In 1918 Emma launched an art-appreciation curriculum for the city's schools. Students drew on contemporary events, like the bombing of the cathedral at Rheims during the Great War, to learn about the artistry of Europe's magnificent cathedrals. She wove art appreciation into other classes, as well. A social studies course on Japanese culture, for example, would include instruction on Japanese art. To facilitate these lessons, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts provided a classroom and free access to all of its galleries and gave Emma a workspace in which to assemble slides for her lectures.[36]

BOTH SIBLINGS PUBLISHED SEVERAL WORKS during the 1910s. Emma's *Drawing and Handwork: Outline and Suggestions* (1913) gave teachers monthly outlines for lessons in all grades. Two years later, Thomas authored "The Winter Bird-Life of Minnesota," a topic he had studied since his teens. In 1916 Emma published *Picture Studies*, a series of booklets focusing on various artists, to prepare children for art study. She also saw her *Pencil and Brush* released, which discussed all aspects of teaching art, from clay modeling to leather tooling, painting to jewelry making.[37]

The next year, the siblings attracted attention in a local magazine, *The Minnesotan*. The May issue included Thomas's "A Minnesota Springtime Bird Calendar," illustrated with his charming photos of baby birds perched on branches. A second article, illustrated with four photographs of rooms, featured Emma's well-designed house, focusing on its comfort, cheeriness, and delight to the inhabitant. Then, in 1918, Thomas produced an extensive paper, "The Water Birds of Minnesota: Past and Present," a report of the state Game and Fish Commission. It was the most comprehensive work on Minnesota birds to date, and it included his photographs of nests with eggs.[38]

In 1919 the Handicraft Guild was absorbed into the University of Minnesota's art education department, a transfer that Emma and Florence Willets initiated. They had been in office almost since the guild's inception and were increasingly burdened with administering both its building and the course offerings. One year later, after 24 years with the public schools, Emma resigned her position.[39] She was 61. At that time, her older brother was still in the early stages of his second career as an ornithologist. His two greatest gifts to Minnesota were yet to come.

Emma and Thomas Roberts, siblings who remained close throughout life, about 1942

AFTER STEADILY WRITING for four years—and using information he had accumulated over a lifetime—Thomas in 1932 saw his two-volume tome, *The Birds of Minnesota*, printed. Part of the book's charm are the beautiful illustrations by six wildlife artists, including a young Walter Breckenridge, who worked for Roberts at the museum, and Frances Lee Jaques, who painted Zen-like watercolors of herons and passenger pigeons. *Birds* introduced Jaques's work to Minnesotans. The book was an instant success, selling out within weeks of being released. The University of Minnesota Press quickly ran a second printing, which also sold out. But Roberts's jubilation was checked by Jennie's death in October 1932, just a few months after publication. They had been married almost 46 years.[40]

Thomas kept on working. In 1936 the second edition of *Birds* was released. Now nearing 80, he began work on an abridged edition, which used the same beautiful paintings as the original.

Meanwhile, the natural history museum on the third floor of the zoology building had outgrown its quarters. In 1938 James Ford Bell offered to donate half the costs of a new structure, should a funding partner be found. In rapid succession, the university sought funds from the New Deal's Public Works Administration, received them, and broke ground at a campus site on Church Street.[41] Thomas was 81.

It was a big year for Roberts: in November 1938 he received the distinguished Brewster Medal from the American Ornithologists' Union for meritorious work in ornithology—and he was a relative newlywed. The bride was Agnes Williams, the Philadelphia artist who had added portraits of wildflowers to Emma's portfolio of watercolors so long ago.[42]

Thomas never retired from the institution that would be renamed the Bell Museum, remaining to oversee most of the dioramas. He stayed in close contact with Emma when she was in Minneapolis. She and Florence Willets frequently wintered in the Los Angeles area, traveling there by train. When in town, she and Thomas dined together at least once a week. A round of four-handed cribbage often followed the meal, the siblings against Agnes and Florence. Sometimes, Thomas squired the three women out to dinner—the Auto Club in Bloomington was a favorite place—or to a movie. The 80-somethings were enamored of Hollywood. Many of their friends from childhood accompanied them into old age, and they were guests of Joe Kingman or one of the Boveys.[43]

After the close of World War II, Emma suffered a year of stunning loss. Florence Wales died in July 1945 at 83; Joe Kingman on New Year's Eve 1945 at 87; brother Thomas at 88 in April 1946, and sister-in-law, Agnes Roberts, at 86 that July. Then, in December 1948 at age 89, Emma herself passed away in Los Angeles.[44]

AS THEY GREW OLDER, the Roberts siblings even came to resemble each other physically. "I was to the art exhibit before school closed," one of Thomas's students wrote, "and I almost went up to a woman and said, 'Hello Dr. Roberts' sister,' for there stood your feminine counterpart—even in speech."[45] It could be said that the two were one in purpose, each pursuing beauty in its many forms. Thomas found it in the graceful world of birds; Emma sought it more broadly, in color and form, in the well-crafted object, in the delicate flower. Both shared the sense that Minnesota, a new place in their childhood, was unformed and evolving, and that they had a role to play in shaping it. Their legacy, rendered diffuse through the passage of time, nonetheless remains: a community attuned to nature and broadly supportive of the visual arts. ▣

Notes

1. T. S. Roberts, "Strangers at Home," May 1877, Thomas S. Roberts and Family Papers, Minnesota Historical Society (MHS).

2. T. S. Roberts, "Rambles of a Bird Lover in Minnesota," *The Flicker*, Oct. 1, 1944, 5–7. The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union had asked Roberts to write a reminiscence.

3. Thomas S. Roberts, *Shotgun and Stethoscope: The Journals of Thomas Sadler Roberts*, ed. and transcribed by Penelope Krosch (Minneapolis: Bell Museum of Natural History, 1991), 11 (July 4, 1874).

4. Roberts, *Shotgun and Stethoscope*, 6 (Apr. 2, 1874), 9 (May 30, 1874). The tamarack swamp was at the present-day site of the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden.

5. Roberts, *Shotgun and Stethoscope*, 212 (Dec. 3, 1881).

6. Harry Woodworth, "Among Those We Know," *Golfer and Sportsman*, Dec. 1938, 77.

7. T. S. Roberts to Frank Benner, Nov. 4, 1877, Roberts papers. Fred and Frank Snyder were also part of the Galaxy; future Minneapolis socialite Harry Robinson wrote the play, *The Diamond Necklace*.

8. John Roberts, Journal, May 5, 1881, Roberts papers.

9. Emma Roberts to T. S. Roberts, July 24, 1880, Roberts papers.

10. Joseph Kingman to T. S. Roberts, Dec. 7, 1879; John Roberts, Journal, May 20, 1881, Oct. 10, 1881—all in Roberts papers.

11. Roberts, *Shotgun and Stethoscope*, 230–31 (Dec. 21, 1883–Jan. 1, 1884).

12. Roberts, *Shotgun and Stethoscope*, 233 (Jan. 27, 1884). These watercolors are now owned by the Bell Museum of Natural History.

13. For one example of Emma managing the household, see John Roberts, Journal, Jan. 3, 1890.

14. John Roberts, Journal, Aug. 24, 1888, Apr. 8, 1890, Feb. 9, 1890.

15. Elizabeth Sadler Roberts, Journal, Feb. 24, 1892, Roberts papers.

16. Elizabeth Roberts, Journal, 1891–93. Several entries relate walking home from Fifty-Seventh Street, the location of the Art Students League.

17. Undated Minneapolis newspaper clipping inserted into Elizabeth Roberts's journal (out-of-state shows); *Minneapolis Tribune*, Oct. 8, 1893, 12; Mrs. L. P. Hunt, "Secretary's Report of the Woman's Auxiliary Board of Minnesota, World's Columbian Exposition," 17–18, folder 2, World's Columbian Exposition pamphlet collection, MHS.

18. *Minneapolis Tribune*, "Interests of the Hour," Mar. 25, 1896, 4.

19. *Minneapolis Tribune*, "The Society Society," Sept. 29, 1895, 18, and "Art," June 18, 1899, A6.

20. Sue Leaf, *A Love Affair With Birds: The Life of Thomas Sadler Roberts* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 103, 101. His house stood south of present-day Central Lutheran Church. Interstate 94 now runs through the yard.

21. Mark V. Barrow Jr., *A Passion for Birds* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 100–01; Leaf, *Love Affair With Birds*, 141.

22. Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 113–14.

23. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Apr. 7, 1904, 5.

24. T. S. Roberts, *The Birds of Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1932), 1: 550–51.

25. Walter Deane to Ruthven Deane, Nov. 19, 1899, folder 136, box 13, Bell Museum of Natural History Records, University of Minnesota Archives, Minneapolis. *Bird Lore*, the forerunner of *Audubon Magazine*, was edited by Roberts's friend Frank Chapman.

26. Here and four paragraphs below, Marcia G. Anderson, "Art for Life's Sake: The Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis," in *Art and Life on the Upper Mississippi, 1890–1915*, ed. Michael Conforti (Newark: University of Delaware Press with the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1994), 127–28.

27. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Oct. 16, 1910, 23, June 2, 1912, 45.

28. Anderson, "Art for Life's Sake," 128–29.

29. T. S. Roberts, case histories (card file), Roberts papers.

30. Jane Cleveland to T. S. Roberts, Feb. 10, Feb. 13, Mar. 2, 1913, folder 53, box 6, Bell Museum records; Leaf, *Love Affair With Birds*, 142, 143.

31. G. H. Partridge to T. S. Roberts, June 6, 1916, folder 159, box 14, Bell Museum records.

32. Caryl B. Storrs, "Minnesota's Wild-Life Museum," *The Minnesotan*, Mar. 1917, 11.

33. Henry Nachtrieb to George E. Vincent, Dec. 26, 1914, folder 24, box 1, Henry Nachtrieb Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

34. Here and below, Leaf, *Love Affair With Birds*, 152. The marsh is long gone, filled in to make recreational fields, but Pearl Park remains.

35. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Jan. 23, 1916, C12, Jan. 10, 1915, A7.

36. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Sept. 6, 1918, 17; "Co-operation with the Public Schools," *Bulletin of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts*, Oct. 1918, 45.

37. Anderson, "Art for Life's Sake," 164; Thomas Roberts, "The Winter Bird-Life of Minnesota," *Fins, Feathers and Fur: The Official Bulletin of the Minnesota Game and Fish Department*, Dec. 1915, 2–13; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Dec. 17, 1916, B12. Copies of *Drawing and Handwork* and *Picture Studies* are in the MHS library.

38. Thomas S. Roberts, "A Minnesota Springtime Bird Calendar," and Harriet S. Flagg, "Where Other People Live," *The Minnesotan*, May 1917, 17–20 and 31–33, respectively; Thomas Roberts, "The Water Birds of Minnesota: Past and Present," *Biennial Report of the Game and Fish Commission, 1918*, 56–91.

39. Anderson "Art for Life's Sake," 131–33; *Minneapolis Journal*, Mar. 28, 1920, 20.

40. Leaf, *Love Affair With Birds*, 188; Thomas S. Roberts, 1932 pocket memorandum, Oct. 7 entry, Roberts papers.

41. T. S. Roberts, "A report to the American Association of Museums for fiscal year ending June 30, 1938," folder 242, box 26, Bell Museum records. The Public Works Administration funded infrastructure, including bridges, dams, hospitals, and schools.

42. Leaf, *Love Affair With Birds*, 203.

43. Roberts, 1938 pocket memorandum: May 29, Aug. 2 (Kingman), Aug. 7 (Boveys), Roberts papers.

44. Anderson, "Art for Life's Sake," 164. Lakewood Cemetery, *www.lakewoodcemetery.com;* search on Mary Roberts to find the listing for Mary Emma.

45. Myrtle Grande to Thomas Sadler Roberts, June 17, 1925, folder 190, box 19, Bell Museum records.

The photos on p. 236 and 237 are courtesy Nancy C. Roberts; p. 238, 239, bottom, and 240, Bell Museum of Natural History; p. 239, top, and 241, top, Minnesota Historical Society; p. 241, bottom, by Tom Leaf, courtesy Will Hegeman; p. 242, University of Minnesota Archives; and p. 244, Lane Phillips.