

# Sarah J. Eddy

May 3, 1851 – March 29, 1945

American artist

Photographer

Suffragette

*Boston Camera Club member in the late 1800s*



*Presentation to the Boston Camera Club*

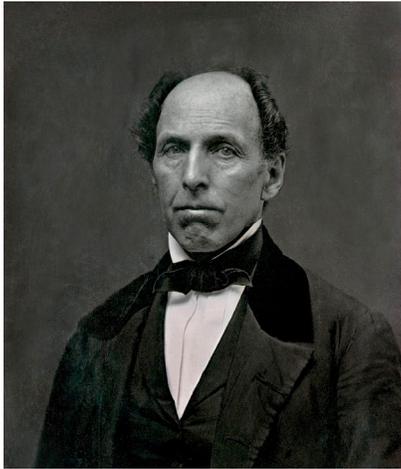
*October 19, 2021*

*by Beth Luchner, Boston Camera Club member*

*In celebration of the Boston Camera Club's 140th anniversary  
honoring some of the club's prominent members in the club's history*

## Sarah J Eddy

Tonight's presentation is about BCC member Sarah J. Eddy. But before I spend time talking about her as an artist, sculptor, and photographer, we're going to begin by looking at some of her ancestors and how they shaped her life.



Francis Jackson:  
Sarah Eddy's maternal grandfather

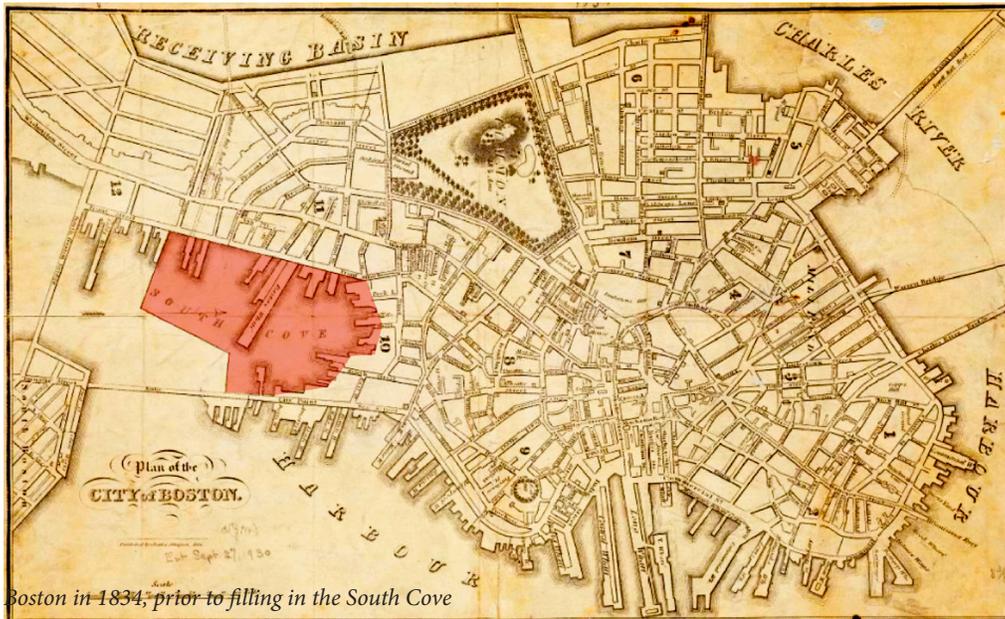
In 1646, Edward Jackson bought a 500-acre farm in Newton, MA. In 1809, Edward's great grandson, Timothy Jackson, built the current home that is the Jackson Homestead and Museum located in Newton today.

The Jackson Homestead and Museum, is a regional center for exploration of the Underground Railroad and one of the first sites recognized by the National Park



Jackson Homestead as it stands today, Newton, MA

Service's Underground Network to Freedom. Francis Jackson is Timothy Jackson's son and Sarah Eddy's maternal grandfather. Francis also has a place in Massachusetts' history. He was an abolitionist in Boston, and served on the Boston City Council. In 1832 he held the position of "Land Commissioner" for the city of Boston.



Francis Jackson worked for the South Cove Corporation c. 1833–1840. Francis is quoted saying that "by 1830 the population (in Boston) had increased so much that it was felt that the time had come when more room was needed, and soon afterwards the first grand real estate enterprise was inaugurated by the filling up of the South Cove" (now known as the South End).

The South Cove project was finished in November 1837. Seventy-seven acres of good land were thus added."

Francis' daughter — Eliza F. Meriam Jackson — married James Eddy. Sarah J. Eddy is Eliza's daughter and Francis Jackson's granddaughter.



James Eddy and Eliza Eddy;  
Sarah's father and mother



Sarah was born May 3, in Boston, Massachusetts. James Eddy was one of Providence's wealthiest citizens, who worked as a painter and engraver. James and Eliza lived in Boston for several years after their marriage, then moved to Providence, Rhode Island in the 1860s.

Sarah's grandfather, Francis Jackson left money in his will to the abolitionist movement.

Eliza Eddy (Francis' daughter) was also active in the anti-slavery and suffrage movements. Sarah's mother's will stipulated that her residential estate be divided equally between Susan B. Anthony and Lucy Stone. Lucy Stone

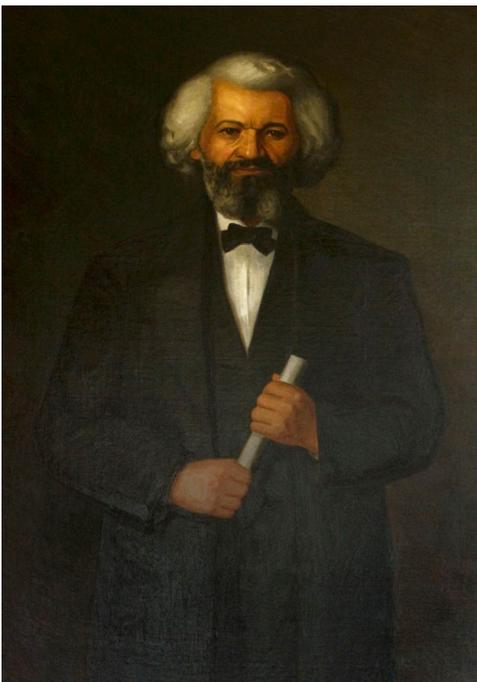


Lucy Stone

was a leading suffragist and abolitionist; she was also the first Massachusetts woman to earn a college degree.

Sarah J. Eddy studied painting and sculpture at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and at the Art Students' League of New York, but had returned to Providence by 1880, when the census showed her living in her parents' house, with her occupation listed as "Paints Pictures."

Sarah was an accomplished artist known as a skilled painter, photographer and sculptor. She was active in the Providence Art Club, sitting on the Executive Committee and Jury of Admission, and exhibiting in at least five of the Club's annual shows in the 1880s.



Frederick Douglass, 1883  
Painting by Sarah J. Eddy  
canvas, oil. H 163 cm, W 124.5 cm  
Douglass holds a baton that symbolizes his authority during his tenure as marshal of the District of Columbia.

Sarah was also a close friend to some of the most notable leaders in the great causes of the day — abolition and women's suffrage. With her experience in painting important portraits, in the 1880s she persuaded Abolitionist Frederick Douglass to come to Rhode Island (she was living in Providence at the time) to sit for a full-length portrait.

The 1887 show at the Providence Art Club included one of two identical portraits that Eddy painted of Frederick Douglass, reportedly the only formal portrait for which Douglass ever sat. Sarah kept one copy, but gave it to W.E.B. DuBois in 1914, who later donated it to Fisk University. Sarah gave the other copy to Douglass; it is now in the collection of the National Park Service, which acquired Douglass's home in 1962.

WEB (William Edward Burghardt) DuBois: American sociologist, historian, civil rights activist, and author. Racism was the main target of DuBois' polemics, and he strongly protested against lynching, Jim Crow Laws, and discrimination in education and employment. His cause included people of color everywhere, particularly Africans and Asians in colonies.



Three different kinds of commercial platinum paper in their original metal tubes, shown with a capsule of calcium chloride desiccant that was used to extend the shelf life of platinum paper  
The Getty Conservation Institute © 2013 J. Paul Getty Trust

*"A Welcome Interruption"*  
Photograph by Sarah Eddy, ca. 1896  
Medium: 1 photographic print: platinum; 20.2 x 15.3 cm.  
on cream mat, 35.5 x 28 cm.  
Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog

Sarah Eddy began exhibiting photographs in 1890, at nearly 40 years of age. Sarah specialized in the platinum process, also known as platinum prints.

The platinum process was widely used by professional, art, and amateur photographers from about 1888 to the beginning of World War I.

Platinum print is made with paper containing light sensitive iron salts and a platinum compound, rather than the conventional silver salts, exposed in daylight in contact with a negative.

The platinum process consists of several distinct steps: 1. A selected paper for platinum printing is usually surface sized with starch or gelatin. 2. The dried sized paper is coated with a solution of ferric oxalate and potassium chloroplatinite and dried in the dark. 3. The dried sensitized platinum paper is exposed under a negative using natural or artificial light sources containing UV radiation. 4. The light exposure produces a faint brownish image made from the photochemically generated ferrous oxalate. 5. The exposed platinum paper is fully developed in a solution of potassium oxalate or other platinum developer. The platinum image appears almost immediately. 6. The developed platinum is "fixed" and cleared by dissolving and removing any unexposed ferric oxalate. 7. The well-fixed platinum is washed in water and dried.

The contrast of platinum photographs could be adjusted by adding a solution of potassium chlorate or dichromate salts. The tonality of platinum prints could be controlled by processing (hot/cold developer, concentration of the developing solution) or by adding mercury salt to the developing solution. The addition of mercury chloride usually pushed the tonality toward a brown or sepia color.



*"Sunny Kitchen"*  
 Photograph by Sarah Eddy  
 19th century, Platinum print  
 Height: 6.1 in (15.7 cm);  
 Width: 7.9 in (20.1 cm)  
 Minneapolis Institute of Art

*"Mother and Child"*  
 Photograph by Sarah Eddy, ca. 1900  
 Medium: 1 photographic print:  
 platinum; 19 x 14 cm.  
 mounted on gray board, 36 x 31,  
 with charcoal intermediate mount.  
 Library of Congress Prints &  
 Photographs Online Catalog

In the 1890s, as an accomplished photographer, her photographs were included in juried exhibitions in Washington, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh and salons in Cleveland, Minneapolis, Toronto and Chicago. Her photographs were frequently shown at the Boston Camera Club.

In 1900, Sarah's photography was shown in two major international exhibitions:

- For the American women photographers at the Paris Universal Exposition, Sarah was among 31 photographers included in an exhibition,
- Sarah was also included in an exhibition in London, titled the "New School of American Photography." This exhibition, organized by F. Holland Day, and contained about 375 photographs by forty-two American Pictorialists.

F. Holland Day was a member who joined Boston Camera Club in 1889. By 1900 F. Holland Day was, with Alfred Stieglitz,



the most influential champion and practitioner of art photography in America and Europe. Day's home in Norwood, Massachusetts is now a museum — The F. Holland Day House & Norwood History Museum — and serves as the headquarters for the Norwood Historical Society.



*"A Fisherman's Home"*

*Photograph by Sarah Eddy, August 1, 1893*

*1 photographic print: platinum 15.2 x 20.2 cm.*

*(Left photo)*

*"Contentment"*

*Photography by Sarah Eddy, ca. 1896*

*Medium: 1 photographic print: platinum;*

*20.2 x 15.2 cm. (8 x 6 in.) mounted on gray board,*

*33.9 x 27.3 cm.*

*Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online*

*Catalog*

*(Bottom left photo)*

*"When I Was a Boy"*

*Photograph by Sarah Eddy, 19th Century*

*Minneapolis Museum of Art*

*(Bottom right photo)*



Sarah's work was recognized by and featured in photographic journals of the period, such as the American Annual of Photography and Wilson's Photographic Magazine.

Sarah held Memberships in the

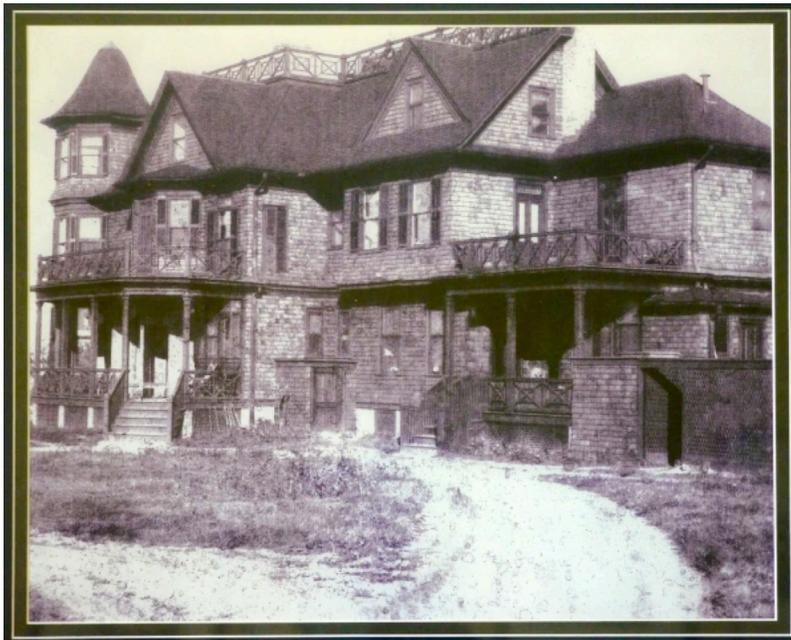
- Boston Camera Club
- Pictorial Photographers of America
- Postal Photographic Club

Sarah preferred photographing children, women, and animals, in both rural and domestic settings

In 1894, Sarah wrote and illustrated the short article "A Good Use for the Camera" for the American Annual of Photography. She concluded that her personal interactions were as rewarding as the finished images.

She is quoted as saying, "We enter into sympathetic relations with the people who furnish us with pictures."

We are grateful to them and they are very grateful to us. We meet on common ground."



Vintage photo of Sarah Eddy Home In Portsmouth, Rhode Island  
A large Victorian situated on the east side of Bristol Ferry Road,  
just south of the Mt. Hope Bridge.

The house shown on the left was the house Sarah Eddy owned in Portsmouth, RI.

"This property, in 1897, used to have 300 acres with it. Down by the river, she had a studio," referring to the "Social Studio" that invited artists and lecturers and was visited by Julia Ward Howe. "Sarah was trying to encourage women to start doing things such as sculpting, pottery, painting.

As a refresher, Julia Ward Howe, she was an American poetess and author, known for writing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic". She was also an advocate for anti-slavery and women's suffrage.

Like her mother, Sarah J. Eddy was committed to the cause of woman suffrage. She was a lifetime member of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and was active at the local level. She served on the executive committee of the Rhode Island Woman Suffrage Association (RIWSA) in 1886, and helped organize "parlor meetings" to persuade voters to support the amendment.

As recent as 2018, Sarah's home was recently renovated and converted into 3 luxury condominiums.



Renovated in 2018, 3 luxury condos



*Painting by Sarah J Eddy, 1901  
Depicts Susan B. Anthony receiving flowers from a group of children  
at her eightieth birthday celebration (which Eddy attended)*

## Abolitionism and Suffragist Rights

In 1901, Susan B. Anthony spent three weeks at Sarah's home in Portsmouth (RI), spending each morning sitting for two portraits.

Susan B. Anthony was the champion of temperance, abolition, the rights of labor, and equal pay for equal work, Susan Brownell Anthony became one of the most visible leaders of the women's suffrage movement.

The "Appeal to womanhood throughout the world" (later known as "Mother's Day Proclamation") by Julia Ward Howe was an appeal for women to unite for peace in the world. Written in 1870, Howe's "Appeal to womanhood" was a pacifist reaction to the carnage of the American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War. The appeal was tied to Howe's feminist conviction that women had a

responsibility to shape their societies at the political level.

This portrait (above) depicts Susan B. Anthony receiving flowers from a group of children at her 80th birthday celebration (which Sarah attended). This portrait hung first in the office of Carrie Chapman Catt, when she was chairman of the Empire State Campaign Committee, and for two years at NAWSA's (National American Woman Suffrage Association) headquarters in Washington.

It was accepted into the National Museum of American History's collections in 1919. According to scholar Richard Kurin, this acquisition marked the beginning of the Smithsonian's efforts to document the women's suffrage movement. In 1910, Sarah donated the other of the Susan B. Anthony portraits to Bryn Mawr College.

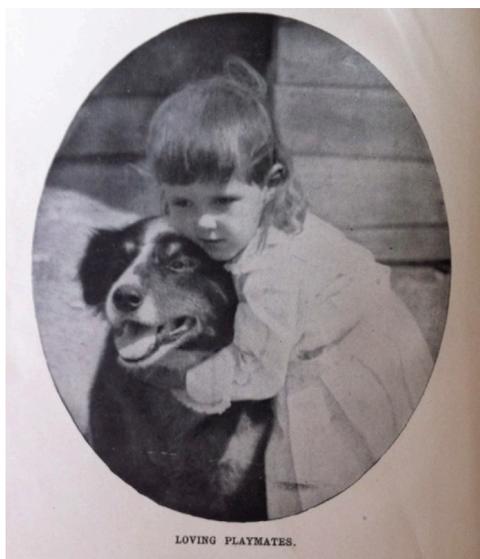
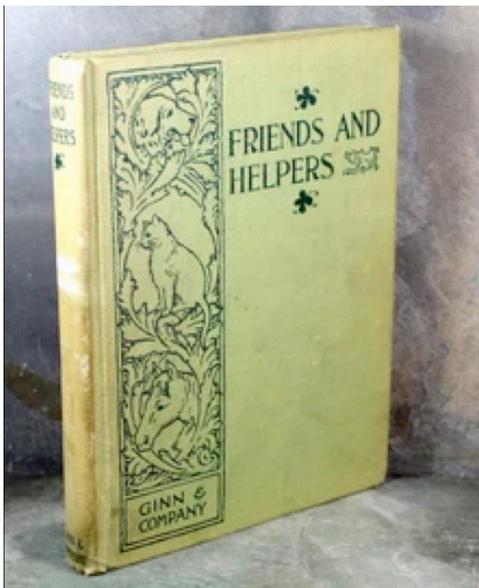
## Activism

Sarah's 1922 photograph of a group of "Votes for Women" buttons collected by California suffragist Alice Park is in the collection of the Library of Congress.

Sarah was an animal welfare activist and vegetarian. She founded the Rhode Island Humane Education Association

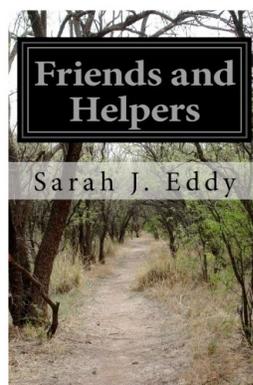
Between 1899 and 1938, Sarah wrote or compiled five children's books on animals and their care, which featured photographs of her own felines.

## Author and Animal Welfare Activist

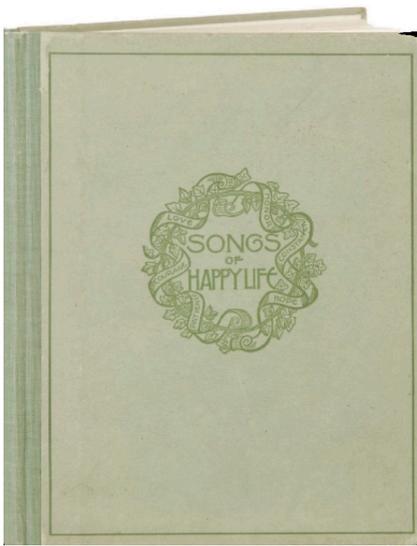


Library of Congress collection

In 1899 Sarah J. Eddy published *Friends and Helpers*, a book which aimed "to teach children to treat all living creatures with considerate kindness and to appreciate the services of man's helpers in the animal world." This book was richly illustrated and featured reproductions of animal-themed artwork and a number of photographs, including one called "Loving Playmates" taken by the Sarah and featured in the book. As you can see, the book is still in production today and is available on Amazon and other web sites.

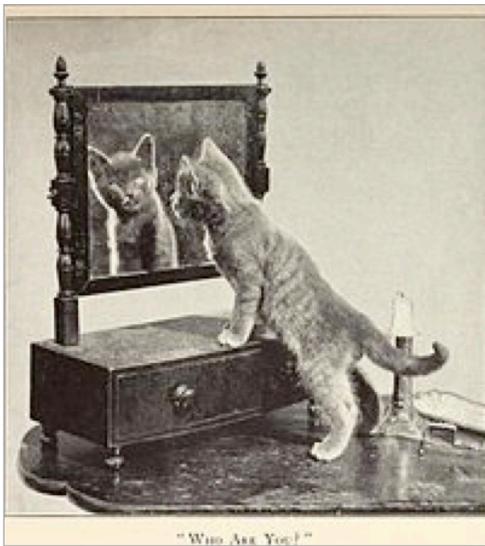


*Friends and Helpers* still in publication today (2014)



At her death, age 94, Sarah was the director of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

One book titled *Songs of Happy Life* was compiled by Sarah, originally published in 1897. The book was dedicated to “all noble and earnest souls who wish to add to the beauty of the world, and to the joyful life of all creatures.”



In 2017, Sarah J. Eddy was inducted into Rhode Island Hall of Fame



Note:  
The images and content in this presentation is based on information found on Wikipedia and other web sites related to Sarah Eddy and her history.