

Florence Hold (1860-1937)

Brief biography

Florence Hold was one of the 9 children of the artist Abel Hold and his wife Sarah, and his only surviving daughter. She was born after the family had moved from Barnsley to Cawthorne village and after the deaths of her two older sisters as babies. As the only daughter she would have to help her mother to look after her father and six brothers. Her father's Quaker faith seems to have lapsed as he became an adult, possibly tested by the deaths of his two daughters. Florence was not baptised until 1872 when she was about 12 years old.

After her mother's death in 1886 she continued to look after her father. She never married and when Abel died, in 1896, she left Brook House and needed to earn her own living. She was just two years younger than her brother Joseph and went to live with him and his family. He was a gamekeeper in Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire and when they later moved to Great Marlow, Buckinghamshire she moved with them. During this time she described herself as an artist.

Their final move was to Blake Hill Farm, Shibden, Halifax and Richard died there in 1928. He was survived by Florence and his wife Louisa. Florence died at the farm in 1937 but she was buried in Cawthorne churchyard on 11th March that year.

Florence must have watched her father painting for many years and like him she chose subjects from nature that she painted in oils. Barnsley Arts, Museums and Archive Service have two oil paintings by Florence, one of a dead game bird, dated 1896, the year her father died, and another of a vase of roses. They have several others attributed to her. They were donated by Joseph's great-grandson so it seems likely that they are by her.

They include a bird's nest, similar in style to those painted by her father, grouse, pheasants and a garden scene. Her paintings do appear at auction from time to time. Although she is not described as an artist until after her father's death, two interesting oils of birds' nests, signed and dated 1882 when she would be about 21 years old, were sold by Bonhams in 2007.

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