



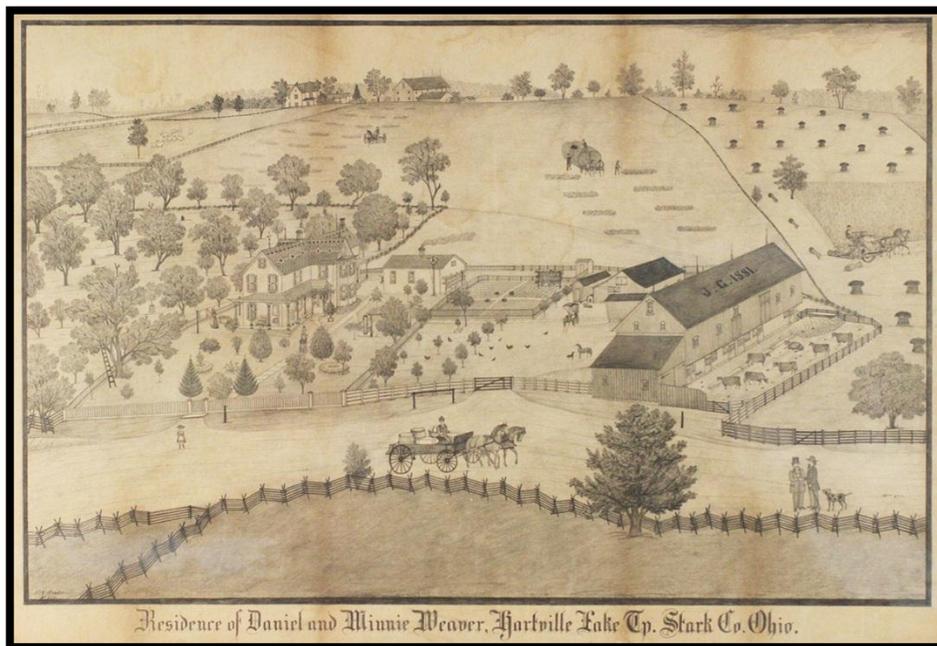
Canton Museum of Art

## Visiting Artist Outreach Program

### THE LEGACY OF FERDINAND BRADER *19th Century Drawings of the Ohio and Pennsylvania Landscape*

December 4, 2014 - March 15, 2015

## Educator Packet



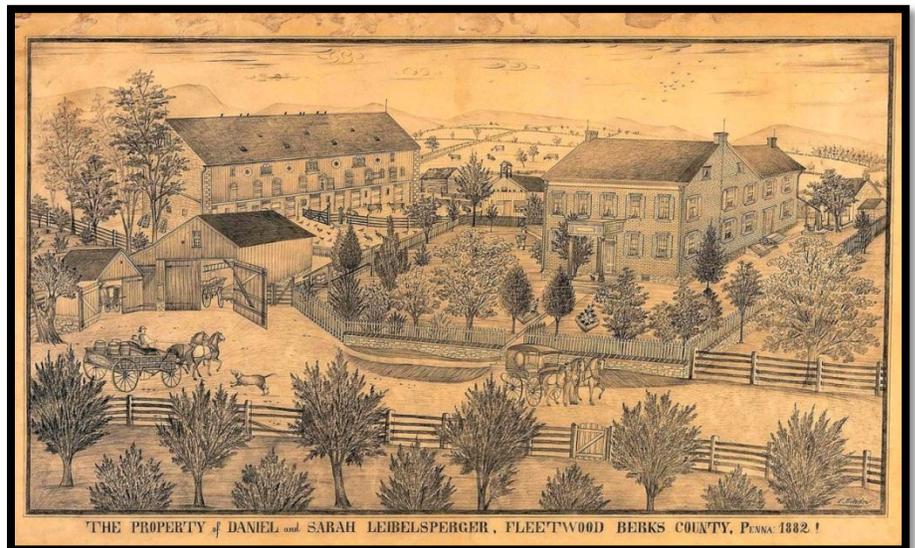
This original retrospective exhibition showcases more than 40 graphite pencil drawings by Brader (1833-1901), a Swiss immigrant and itinerant folk artist who captured views of daily life on family homesteads and businesses during his travels through Pennsylvania (including Berks, Lancaster and Lebanon counties) and Ohio (including Stark, Tuscarawas, Wayne, Medina, Portage and surrounding counties). Brader identified the owners and township of each property he drew, and he used a sequential numbering system for the drawings. Approximately 215 drawings have been identified (59 from Pennsylvania and 156 from Ohio), from what is believed to be at least 980. Today, Brader works are held in private collections, as well as museums including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Art Institute of Chicago, the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum, and the Canton Museum of Art.

# THE LEGACY OF FERDINAND BRADER

Although there remain mysteries and unanswered questions about the life of this intriguing artist enough facts have been uncovered to provide an outline for the puzzle of his life.

Ferdinand A. Brader was born in Kaltbrunn, St. Gallen, Switzerland in 1833. Many details of Brader's early life are incomplete, but by the mid-1860s, he had married and had a son. His Mother bought a school house and converted the building into a combination family home and village bakery. It was here that Brader had his earliest artistic training, as he honed his skills as a modelstecher (carver of wooden molds for use in impressing a design on certain baked goods), at which he must have become quite skilled.

Brader emigrated on his own, from Switzerland to America at some time before 1879. There are no extant records of how, when, or why, Brader chose to leave Switzerland. Upon his arrival in the United States he traveled extensively in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

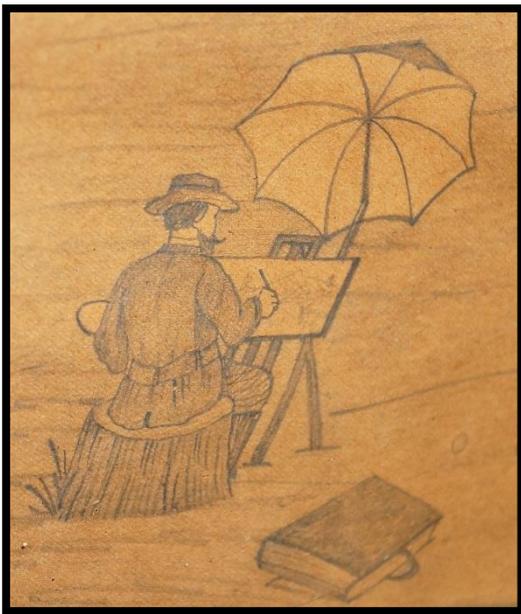


As payment for room and board, he would

create large pencil drawings of the farms and properties where he was given temporary residence. Families have passed down stories of how he slept in their barn or other outbuildings. Brader also sold his drawings and priced his work anywhere from \$1-\$5 per drawing. A dollar from 1880 would be worth almost \$23 today. He spent the spring, summer, and fall traveling and drawing, he took to spending the winters in almshouses and infirmaries. Brader probably did a great deal of walking between assignments, took advantage of rides when offered, and perhaps used the trains.

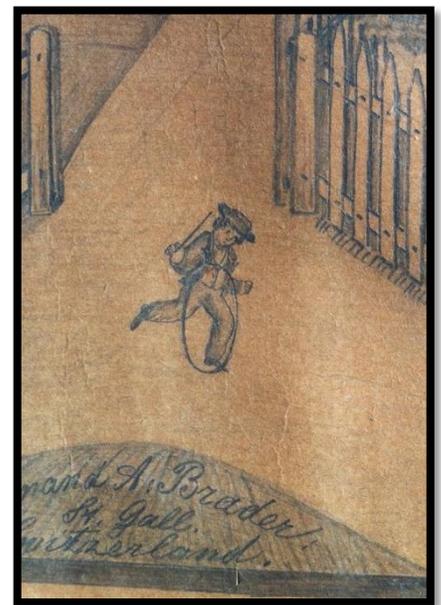
*The Property of Michael J. and Catharine Kreibuill, Canton Tp., Stark Co. Ohio, 1886*

Brader must have had an unusually keen mind to remember what he saw and to reproduce it so quickly and accurately. Some people say that he walked the perimeter and outbuildings of any given farm in the morning and drew in the afternoon. There are many perspectives from which Brader drew that he could not possibly have attained. Brader must have been capable of projecting in his mind what he saw in front of him, from another angle entirely, which gave him more of an overall view. Although photography had been invented, other than an expensive lithograph, there was no way to get a wide-angle view of one's property, let alone from a bird's-eye perspective or in the extreme detail that typified his work.



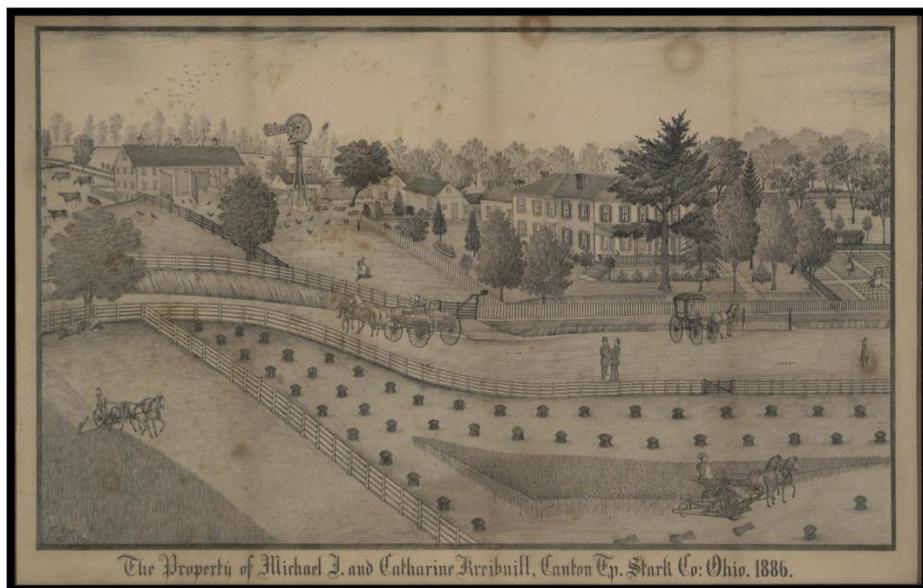
Brader included many details inside his drawings according to his patrons' requests. Brader often personalized the drawings, showing the owner, family members, children, and pets. In many of the drawings he drew himself as an artist sitting on a stump working with an easel shaded by an umbrella, an observer standing in a barn door, a fellow chatting in the road, or sometimes he even drew himself helping with some of the farm chores.

Brader reached farmers through promotional efforts that included reporting on his travels and productivity to newspapers, having drawings hung in store windows and by word-of-mouth, as customers shared their delight in his drawings with neighbors and extended family. Brader's works would have been prominently displayed in his clients' parlors, which were considered a "public" room of the house in Victorian times. The contents of the parlor allowed a family to express its position, values, memories, and mementos. Usually at the front of a house, it held the best furniture and was where major milestones—births, weddings, deaths—in the family were celebrated or commemorated.



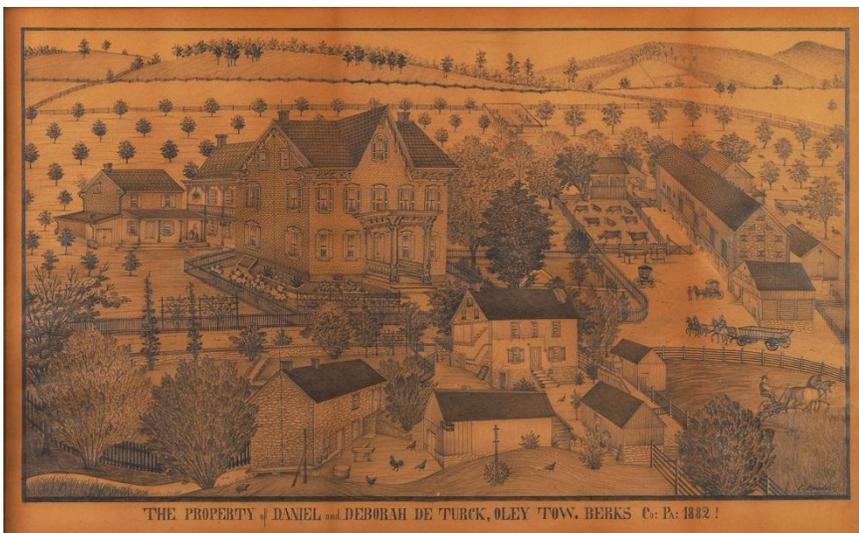
*Detail of The Property of Adam and Mary Blum, Sewickley Town. Allegheny Co: Pa: 1883.*

In early 1896, several Ohio newspapers, including “The Repository,” reported Brader’s disappearance from Ohio, but later confirmed that he had returned to his home in Switzerland to collect an inheritance. Brader apparently wrote to the Canton Repository, sometime during March 1896, to clear up the confusion caused by his sudden departure, which had caused rumors and reports that he had disappeared under mysterious circumstances. It is not known what he did between February 1896 and 17 June 1900, the last date he was “seen or heard from” according to court records.



*Image of #501, the Kreibuill farm, co Blum, Sewickley Town. Stark Co: OH: 1886*

Although we may never discover the answers to these and many other questions, the extraordinary drawings of Ferdinand A. Brader remain as a gift and as a glimpse into the life of our rural American ancestors in Pennsylvania and Ohio.



*The Kreibuill farm, co Blum, Sewickley Town. Stark Co: OH: 1882*

### **Brader’s life Timeline**

- 1833- Born**
- 1860- Married**
- 1864- Birth of son**
- 1873- Arrived in Pennsylvania**
- 1884- Arrived in Ohio**
- 1891-2- Portage County Infirmary**
- 1892-5- Stark County Infirmary**
- 1895- Inherited Fortune**
- 1896- Went back to Switzerland**
- 1901- Declared “lost and missing without a trace”**

# The Materials He Used

The materials Brader used in his drawings include portable elements that he surely carried with him. These probably encompassed graphite pencils, colored pencils, erasers, a small ruler, knife, and perhaps also a sketchbook/journal. The items that seem too large to have been transported by Brader, are a drawing board and a long ruler or straightedge, which Brader may have borrowed at each locale. Brader would always have been in regular need of fresh paper and new pencils. It is fitting to suppose that he acquired them as they became available. All of these smaller items could easily have been carried in some sort of knapsack, but working on the huge scale that he usually employed would have made carrying paper extremely difficult.

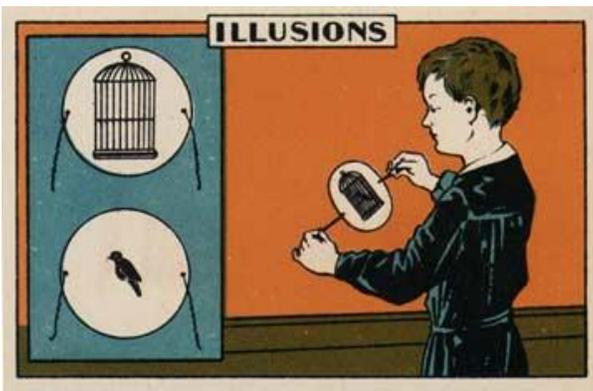
**Pencils:** There are many ways to sharpen a pencil, and there were some pencil sharpeners available. However, considering Brader's previous experience in Switzerland, carving wooden molds for the family bakery, he was certainly handy, as well as skilled, with a knife and wood. Whittling away the surrounding wood to reveal the pencil lead first and then pointing the pencil, by making a sharp point of the exposed lead, has long been a simple and common method of sharpening. Brader started using colored pencils in 1892, he often used both black graphite and colored pencils together. There is only little evidence of his use of an eraser, and we do not know what type Brader may have used, even if only occasionally.

**Paper:** The paper that the drawings were created on is self-destructing and will eventually disappear. Brader's paper contained large amounts of highly acidic wood pulp which began to deteriorate as soon as the paper was made. The framing and backing of Brader's drawings was usually accomplished with wood, and this destructive combination of wood with air and humidity reached the drawing between cracks in the wood slats on the back and wherever it touched the drawing. He also brushed buttermilk onto the drawing as a fixative which also adds to the deterioration of his work. The degradation of Ferdiand Brader's papers can be halted and the dark discolorations partially removed, by modern processes of aqueous de-acidification and light energy treatments, performed by professional paper conservators.



*Larry Coley with his drawing at the first Brader Day July 2012 before professional conservation.*

# Popular Toys from the 1800s



## THAUMATROPE

is a toy that was popular in the 19th century. A disk with a picture on each side is attached to two pieces of string. When the strings are twirled quickly between the fingers the two pictures appear to blend into one due to the persistence of vision.

## CUP AND BALL TOYS

Toys of the cup & ball family had already been favorite childhood amusements for many centuries by the time of settlements in the North American colonies, and they have remained popular throughout American history. In simple cup & ball toys, the ball is tossed and caught in a cup on the end of a stick.



## BUZZ SAW

The sound of the whirling disk lends this folk toy its common name of “buzzer”. The scalloped edge of the buzzer identifies it more particularly as a “buzz saw” toy. In past times the edge was often sharply cut into a sawtooth pattern, but a buzz saw with any shaped edge will produce an impressive loud, whizzing noise when it reaches full speed.

## TOPS

Adults and children alike have been fascinated with spinning toys since antiquity, and top games are seen in all parts of the world throughout time. At least five types of tops were known in England by the 16th century, including peg tops, whip tops, and hand spun tops; the North American Indian tribes also have a rich heritage of top games, many of which were played on the ice.



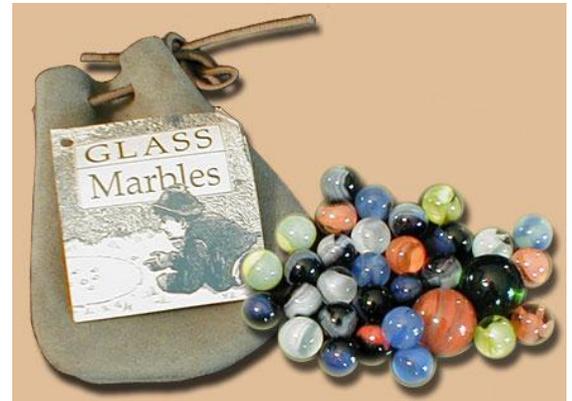


### JACOBS LADDERS

The mysterious movement of this puzzling toy has fascinated generations of American children. The Jacobs Ladder still confounds us with its seemingly inexplicable motion. A Jacobs Ladder was usually constructed of solid wood segments attached with ribbon.

### MARBLE GAMES

Children in colonial America played with marbles made of stone or clay, while glass marbles were highly prized among children's playthings in the 19th century. Enclosure games, hole games, and conquering games are all traditional marble games that are still familiar today.



### ROLLING HOOP

The early North American colonists brought this pastime with them from Europe; in the 19th century, both wood and metal hoops were favorite playthings. The hoops can be trundled along in solitary play or raced by any number of players.

### GAME OF GRACES

Opponents send gaily beribboned hoops whirling towards each other to be caught on the tips of slender wands in this exciting and elegant outdoor game. The game of Graces was considered proper and beneficial exercise for young ladies in the early 1800's, and it was proper as well for boys to join in the game as a "lark". Judging by children's books and store advertisements, the game of Graces remained as popular throughout the 19th century as it is today.



# Vocabulary

**Folk Art** - Art made by people who have had little or no formal schooling in art. Folk artists usually make works of art with traditional techniques and content, in styles handed down through many generations, and often of a particular region.

**Horizon line** - A level line where water or land seems to end and the sky begins.

**Persistence of vision** - Is the theory where an afterimage is thought to persist for approximately one twenty-fifth of a second on the retina, and believed to be the explanation for motion perception.

**Perspective** - The technique artists use to project an illusion of the three-dimensional world onto a two-dimensional surface.

**Photography** - The art, craft, and science of producing permanent images of objects on light-sensitive surfaces. Louis Daguerre developed the first permanent photographic images in 1839, having continued the pioneering work of Joseph Niepce. Daguerre's process is called the daguerreotype.

**Thaumatrope** - Is a toy that was popular in the 19th century. A disk with a picture on each side is attached to two pieces of string. When the strings are twirled quickly between the fingers the two pictures appear to blend into one due to the persistence of vision.

**Value** - An element of art that refers to the lightness or darkness of a color. This is important in any polychromatic image, but it can be more apparent when an image is monochromatic, as in many drawings, woodcuts, lithographs, and photographs. This is commonly the case in much sculpture and architecture too.

**Vanishing point** - In linear perspective, a position on a horizon where lines or rays between near and distant places appear to converge (come together). In order to produce an illusion of depth in a two-dimensional representation of space, artists sometimes use one, two, or more vanishing points.

## References

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