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## HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

# Women's Art Association of Canada

Prepared by Miss F. Deeks and read by Mrs. W. D. Gregory,  
on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the  
Association, in the New Galleries,  
594 Jarvis Street

TORONTO, May 15th, 1912.

In September, 1887, a group of young women was organized in Toronto into a self-governing, mutually helpful society on the same plan of work and study as that of the Art Students' League in New York. A large, well-lighted studio was opened in the Yonge Street Arcade in connection with the Associated Artists, but separate from them, and in that studio, those young women used to meet and work together—drawing, painting, modelling, and also sketching from still life, and the living model, which was a new step in art education in Toronto.

These young artists carried off the Government prizes and medals at the Toronto Exhibition in 1888, and they were very ambitious to pursue the work that was being done by serious students in Paris and New York. As there was no opportunity for seeing good pictures, or hearing lectures on art, they undertook the initiative in Toronto—and later in other parts of Canada—of gathering together good pictures, and holding loan exhibits. They also held exhibitions of their own work, and arranged musicales, and lectures on art, illustrated with photographs, gravures and etchings.

Friends were invited to spend an hour at the studio on each Wednesday afternoon for art conversation, which was followed by a lecture—the first Wednesday of the month, however, being reserved for talking upon composition, and for criticism of the students' efforts in that direction. Notable among the lectures of this period were two given by Miss Stetson, of Boston, on Greek Art, and which were illustrated with 500 photographs.

Those art talks and lectures were the precursors of the delightful Art Study Club, and the organized lecture courses of after years.

In 1889 (23 years ago) the first Art Loan Exhibition was held in Toronto. Along with the Club's work in painting, drawing, and industrial design, more than fifty loaned canvases were exhibited for the purpose of giving the students an opportunity of studying some of the pictures in Toronto, and of giving the public a chance of seeing them.

Prominent among the loans was a fine portrait of Liszt, by Baron Jukofsky, lent by Messrs. Mason and Risch. It displayed so much of the skill and mastery of resource characteristic of a great portrait that to see it was a lesson in art treatment and art method.

The Club had reason to congratulate itself upon the success of the Exhibition, and upon the excellence of its own artistic work displayed.