

BRIDGEWATER, 1933
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FREDERICK WHITMAN GLASIER

Masterful Photographer

Captured the Essence of the Traveling Circus During Its Heyday

Frederick Whitman Glasier was born on March 5, 1866, in Adams, Massachusetts. By 1890, Glasier had moved to Brockton where he opened the Glasier Art Studio and Museum. From his residence, Glasier worked, exhibited his photographs, and sold copies of his prints. In 1933, he and his wife, Emma, purchased two parcels of land on Beebe Road in Bridgewater.

Many of Glasier's well known photographs were taken of performances at the historic Brockton Fair. In addition to providing vestiges of a bygone era, Glasier's work is admired for his intriguing subjects and a level of skill that surpassed the technology available to him.

Glasier recorded everything: the pandemonium of the circus' arrival, the raising of the big top tent and the myriad of a circus— from cooks to daredevils. While Glasier took scenic shots of the circus and portraits of circus performers for commercial sale, he also documented the daily life of the traveling circus and Wild West show.

“Heyday: The Photographs of Frederick W. Glasier”, was a 2010 exhibit at the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida. The photographs represent a 20 year conservation project at the museum, which acquired 1,700 of Glasier's glass plate negatives from a collector in 1963. Most were in bad shape. Thanks to technology and grants from major foundations, all have been scanned and cataloged and the images preserved. Glasier was not only a fine documentarian but also a gifted portrait artist.

Courtesy of Register of Deeds John R. Buckley, Jr.
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