

Frank A Sadorus.

☆ Photographic artist. ☆

The self-taught photographer Frank Sadorus (1880–1934) was an amateur in the truest sense of the word and his avocation was his passion. He photographed what he loved: life on the family farm and the family with whom he shared it.

The farm had been in the family for four generations. Frank's great-grandfather had been the first European settler in Champaign County, and the community that developed there was called Sadorus after his grandfather. Frank lived with his parents, George William Bacon (known as G.W.B.) and Phoebe, and three of his four siblings—eldest brother Elmer; younger brother Warren, who eventually married and left the farm; and the baby of the family, his sister Mary. An older brother, Enos, was married and lived in Urbana. Enos does not appear in many photographs, but it was he who probably first introduced Frank to photography.

The Wabash Railroad that ran from Detroit to St. Louis brought Frank magazines, books, newspapers, cameras, and photo supplies. With his view camera, he photographed family portraits, self-portraits, still lifes, and landscapes of the surrounding timberlands. He photographed the family at work and relaxing during the off-seasons.

His photographs depict the idyllic life of a close-knit family in a rural Eden. Change comes even to Eden, and it came to Frank's as his family, caught up in the growing industrialization of the country, sold the farm. Within three months, Frank was committed to an asylum.

