

BORN IN BEAUDESERT, QUEENSLAND 1961

LIVES AND WORKS IN SYDNEY

Fleas or The Menses of Lizzie Borden

Andrew Jackson Borden father of Emma and Lizzie Borden

Abby Durfee Gray Borden second wife of Andrew Borden and step-mother of Emma and Lizzie

Emma Lenora Borden older Borden sister

Lizzie Andrew Borden younger Borden sister

Bridget Sullivan Borden maid, also known as Maggie by Emma and Lizzie after the last maid

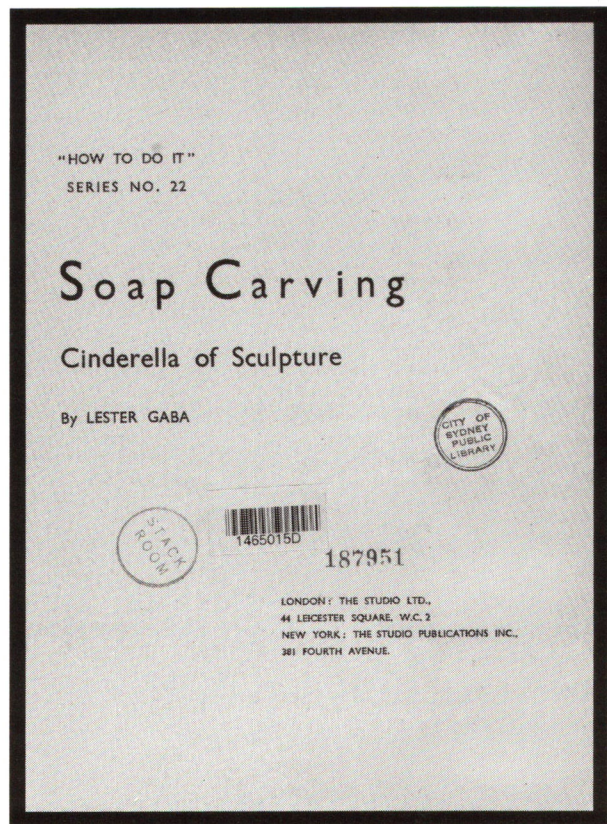
Mrs Mary A. Raymond a dressmaker of Fall River

Lizzie went to the library a lot. She was a subscriber; actually she was a life member. Her grandfather's name was etched into the foundation stone. She had special borrowing privileges.

She liked the technical books best; the "how to" books, the periodicals about the latest inventions. Every month she would take a stack of books to her room. For five days at a stretch she would stay up there and study these manuals. She knew how to make sinkers out of strips of lead and how to make colourful flies for the kinds of fish that she and her father caught in the cold waters of Fall River. She taught herself how to sharpen saws, scissors, knives, even serrated ones. She knew how locks and keys worked and for five days she practised unlocking her bedroom door without the key.

She knew how cotton was spun and woven to make fabric, how this fabric was dyed and last month she read about a new invention - the slide fastener - a long row of tiny metal clasps, like teeth she thought, that locked and unlocked by means of a moveable guide. With one wrist action they were shut tight and with the next, two separate rows of shiny teeth. She was longing to try it out herself, to work its magic, to make it one of her secret pleasures.

She imagined the satisfaction of cutting off all the buttons that ran down the back of her cotton dresses. She hated her dresses; not the fabric which was a good Bedford cord, nor the colour which was blue and suited her light green eyes and fair skin, nor yet the design which complimented her shape. It was the buttons. Someone else had to do them up for her in the morning and undo them again at the other end of the day. Mostly it was her sister Emma, but if Emma wasn't there, it was Maggie and if she was busy with chores, that only left Abby and she would rather spend all day in her morning wrapper than ask Abby for such an intimate favour. With this new fastener, she could do it all herself and never have to ask anyone for anything ever again. What's more it was fast, she could be in and out of her dresses in less time than it took to cross the bedroom floor. She would send for some of the fasteners right away and get Mrs Raymond to sew them into all her dresses.



Reference material for the performance *Fleas or The Menses of Lizzie Borden*.

BARBARA CAMPBELL

Selected Performances

Backwash, 1993, Art Gallery of New South Wales for *Australian Perspecta 1993* and the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane. Produced as a radio program for the Listening Room, ABC-FM, 1994

Cries from the Tower, 1992, ABC Ultimo Centre for the Third International Symposium on Electronic Arts (TISEA) and Queen's College, Melbourne University for Experiment

The Diamond Necklace Affair, 1991, Artspace at Pier 4/5, Sydney for *Frames of Reference*, a Dissonance project. Also performed in Brisbane, Melbourne and Los Angeles, 1991-93

Loom of Arachne, 1990, The Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne for Experimenta. Also performed in Sydney and Brisbane, 1991

Ariadne's Trace, 1990, The Performance Space Gallery, Sydney. Also performed at Linden Gallery, Melbourne, 1992

Carmen (privately) with Sherre DeLys 1989, Art Gallery of New South Wales

The Seduction of Art with Ted Riggs, 1982, One Flat Exhibit, Brisbane. Also performed at The Performance Space Gallery, Sydney, 1986 and with Yuji Sone at Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney, 1993