

Shadows on the Wall



The Life and Works of
Howard Weeden



Howard Weeden

Acclaimed by Joe Chandler Harris, creator of “Uncle Remus,” as the “bright light” of late nineteenth century Southern authors, Maria Howard Weeden’s works provide a rare view into post-Civil War life in Huntsville, Alabama.

A native of Huntsville, Miss Weeden was born in 1846, the youngest child of Dr. William Donalson Weeden and Jane Eliza Brooks Urquhart. Afforded the luxury of plantation life, Miss Weeden would receive a fine education and show an early interest in art. Her artistic ability would play a critical role in the family’s well being when the Civil War left them in financial ruin.

Maria Howard Weeden started out as an illustrator of other writers’ work but gradually began to illustrate her own poems. Before her death in 1905, she would publish four volumes of poetry and illustrations: *Shadows on the Wall* (1898), *Bandanna Ballads* (1899), *Songs of the Old South* (1901), and *Old Voices* (1904). The present volume reproduces the poetry from Miss Weeden’s first three collections. It also includes some of the illustrations and paintings created by this unique artist and poet who signed her works “Howard Weeden.”

Dr. Frances C. Roberts is Professor Emerita of History at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. Mrs. Sarah Huff Fisk is a well known local historian.

Both Roberts and Fisk are former presidents of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society.

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of
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By

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and

SARAH HUFF FISK

Notes on the Fourth Printing of this Volume

Since this work was first published in 1962, further research has revealed new facts concerning the life of Maria Howard Weeden. Estate papers of Dr. William Weeden, and newspaper articles of the time have established that Dr. Weeden died on January 13, 1846, and that Maria Howard Weeden's birthdate was July 7, 1846, rather than 1847 which is recorded in most of the published information concerning the artist.

Because of legal actions against the estate, the processing of the estate lasted for many years, and in these case files was found a receipt for tuition at the Huntsville Female Seminary for Maria Howard Weeden, confirming the fact that she attended this institution.

Over the last thirty years interest in Howard Weeden's watercolors has increased to such an extent that they often sell at auction for prices up to \$6,000 each. An extensive collection of her works is periodically on exhibit at the Burritt Museum, Huntsville, Alabama. The City of Huntsville and the Twickenham Historic Preservation District Association has collaborated on the restoration of the Weeden home where Howard Weeden lived all of her life. Located at 300 Gates Avenue, Huntsville, it is open to the public as a house museum.

The Authors

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“Beaten Biscuit”

Of course I'll gladly give de rule
I meks beat biscuit by,
Dough I ain't sure dat you will mek
Dat bread de same as I.

'Case cookin's like religion is—
Some's 'lected, an' some ain't,
An' rules don't no more mek a cook
Den sermons mek a Saint.

Well, 'bout de 'grediances required
I needn't mention dem,
Of course you knows of flour and things,
How much to put, an' when;

But soon as you is got dat dough
Mixed up all smooove an' neat,
Den's when your genius gwine to show,
To get dem biscuit beat!

Two hundred licks is what I gives
For home-folks, never fewer,
An' if I'm 'spectin' company in,
I gives five hundred sure!



Burritt Museum & Park is a museum of regional history located on Round Top Mountain in Huntsville, Alabama. The Museum holds an extensive collection of Weeden's works, which is periodically on exhibit. Originally the estate of Dr. William Henry Burritt, the 167-acre site contains the fourteen room Burritt Mansion, a collection of nineteenth century regional historic structures and mountain nature trails.



The birthplace of Maria Howard Weeden is located in the famed Twickenham Historic District of downtown Huntsville. The Weeden House was built in 1819, and is a superb example of Federal architecture. This accurately restored house/museum, complete with historic furnishings, is located at 300 Gates Avenue.