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The Art of Maude J. Mitchell (1875-1957)

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*The Art of
Maude J. Mitchell
(-1875--1957)*



THRESHING DAY
Maude Mitchell

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Maude Josephine Mitchell was the daughter of early Wabaunsee County pioneers Captain William and Mary Mitchell. Captain Mitchell was a leader of the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony who came to the area in 1856. He operated an Underground Railroad station at his home three miles east of the town of Wabaunsee.



Maude Mitchell received her early education at District School #2 in Wabaunsee County. She attended the New York State Normal College at Buffalo, New York. After graduation, Mitchell taught district school near Manhattan, Kansas. She then went to New York City to study art, graduating from Columbia University's School of Art in 1900. She also studied at the Art Students League in Manhattan and Woodstock, New York.

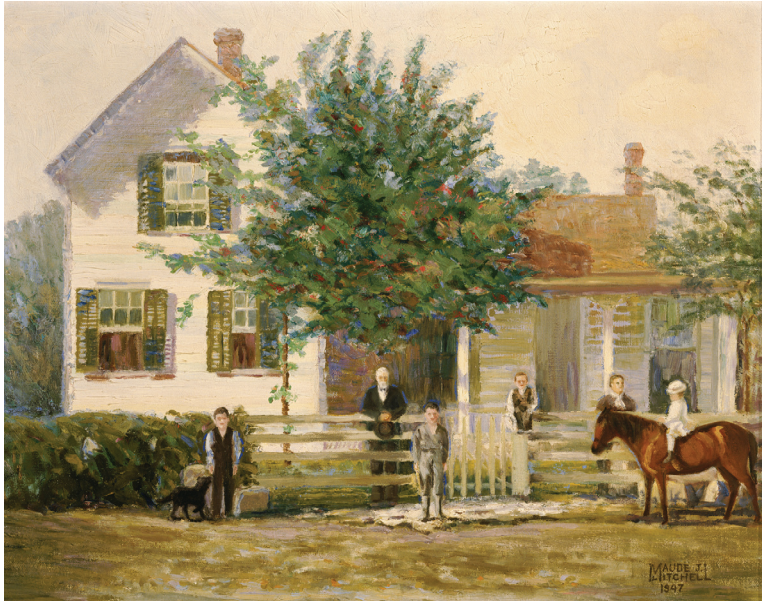
Mitchell served as art supervisor

in the public schools of Dubuque, Iowa. She led the art department of the Platteville State Normal School in Wisconsin for thirteen years.

In 1915, her mother passed away, and she returned to Kansas to take charge of the Mitchell Ranch.

Continuing to paint, Mitchell became a well-known Kansas artist.

She exhibited her work in regional exhibitions, including those in Kansas City and Topeka.



MITCHELL HOME 1879
Maude Mitchell
Courtesy of Marsha Reeves

Many of Mitchell's paintings present views of Pottawatomie and Wabaunsee counties. The artist sought to preserve the architecture and landscape around her in impressionistic watercolors and oils. Her favorite subjects were wheat fields and the Flint Hills prairie. A few of the artist's works touch on the story of black settlement in post-Civil War Wabaunsee County.

Many area residents took art lessons

from Mitchell. Some of her former students are still painting in the Wamego area.

Occasionally Mitchell traveled to Florida to spend the winter with her brother. These journeys inspired several Florida landscapes.

Mitchell was also a musician and composer. Among her published works were such tunes as "Prairie Roads a Windin'" (recorded by Roy Rogers), "The Dance of Romance,"



MAUDE MITCHELL, CA. 1895
Wabaunsee County Historical Society



FARMER'S PLAY DAY, WAMEGO CITY PARK JULY 4TH, 1932
 Maude Mitchell
 Courtesy of Jane Auerswald



ENLOW RANCH, WAUBAUNSEE
 Maude Mitchell
 Courtesy of Nancy Sommers

and "Ridin' in the Rain." The artist's other accomplishments include a series of murals for Columbia University and the design for the stone gateway at the Wabaunsee Township Cemetery. Mitchell's poetry, editorials, and cartoons were published widely. She had an interest in public affairs and a wide circle of friends. Mitchell was a leader among those who have sought to preserve and make vital the history and culture of Wabaunsee County.

After many years of living in the Flint Hills near Wamego, Carol Cook now lives in Topeka with her husband, Doug. She has been a classroom teacher in the Paxico area for twenty years. Cook discovered Maude Mitchell while helping her young daughter research Captain Mitchell and his involvement with the Wabaunsee Underground Railroad. Cook has organized exhibitions of Mitchell's work for the Wamego Senior Center (1989) and Columbian Theatre in Wamego (1999). She is currently co-organizing a Mitchell exhibition for the Wabaunsee County Historical Society and Museum, in Alma, Kansas.