



HAWTHORNE

Fine Art

Virginia Chandler Titcomb (1838-1912)

Virginia Chandler Titcomb, originally from Otterville, Illinois, was an active painter, photographer, and writer in New York during the late nineteenth century. She was born in 1838 to Juliana (Humiston) and Hiram Chandler. Titcomb was a descendant of Captain Miles Standish who arrived in Plymouth aboard the Mayflower in 1620. On her mother's side she was descended from Matthias Hitchcock, a founder of New Haven, Connecticut.¹ In 1869 she married John Abbott Titcomb, a dealer in flour and grain, from Farmington, Maine. Together, the couple had three children named Charles Chandler Titcomb, Harold Abbott Titcomb, and Leila White Titcomb.²

In 1884, Titcomb founded and served as the president of the Patriotic League of the Revolution which sought to collect and preserve American revolutionary relics. The league worked in conjunction with a National Industrial Union to advance American art and promote the work of women.³ A decade later, as president of the National Industrial union, Titcomb spoke on behalf of the organization at the National Women's council in Washington.⁴

In 1889, Titcomb was an associate member of the Brooklyn Institute in the departments of Archaeology, Fine Arts, Geology, Mineralogy and Photography.⁵ In 1891, she was a member of the exhibition committee for the first exhibition of the Institute's Photographic Department.⁶ In 1892, Titcomb contributed her photographic work, including *Dining-room of the White House* to the department's 2nd annual exhibit. The reviewer for the *Photographic Times* said that Titcomb was, "one of the best photographers of the Institute" and further noted that her "miscellaneous views are good, the 'Interior,' No. 69, is splendid."⁷

In 1894, art contributors from the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* were invited to Titcomb's residence on Brooklyn's Lafayette Avenue. On display were several of Titcomb's portrait paintings including a life size painting of the prominent Brooklyn preacher Henry Ward Beecher, a portrait of her mother entitled *Sunday Afternoon*, and a portrait of her niece. The artist also displayed still lifes, landscapes, and a bronze

¹ "Mrs. V.C. Titcomb Dies Very Suddenly," *Brooklyn Times Union* (Brooklyn, New York), Fri, Feb 16, 1912, 4.

² John Francis Sprague, *Sprague's journal of Maine history*, Vol. XI, No. 1 (Dover-Foxcroft, Maine: John Francis Sprague, 1923) 28.

³ "Women Take Up His Case," *The Brooklyn Citizen* (Brooklyn, New York), Sun, Jun 24, 1900, 7.

⁴ "About Brooklyn People," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (Brooklyn, New York), Sun, Feb 24, 1895, 19.

⁵ *The Second Year Book of the Brooklyn Institute*, 1889-90 (Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Institute, 1890), 67, 71.

⁶ Catherine Weed Barnes, *The American Amateur Photographer*, Vol. III, No. 6 (Boston: American Amateur Photographer, 1891) 235.

⁷ W.I. Lincoln Adams, *The Photographic Times and American Photographer*, Vol. XXII, (New York: The Photographic Times Publishing Association, 1892), 291.



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relief depicting a Greek maiden entitled *The Sound of the Angelic Harp* which was exhibited at the National Academy of Design.⁸

During her lifetime, Titcomb was a member and officer of the Sorosis⁹ and contributed to prominent publications such as Harper's Bazaar and Demorest's. She was the first president of the Brooklyn Woman's Republican League Club¹⁰ as well as a prominent member of the of the Fort Greene chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.¹¹ The Fort Greene chapter was founded by her sister Eliza Matilda Chandler White (1831-1907).¹²

Titcomb exhibited her paintings at the National Academy of Design and at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. She died at the home of her daughter in Rockville Centre, Long Island in 1912. She was 74 years old.¹³

Titcomb Mountain in Farmington, Maine was named in honor of the artist's grandson, Capt. John A. Titcomb, a marine who lost his life during the second world war.¹⁴

⁸ "Genius at Home: The Artwork of Mrs. Virginia Chandler Titcomb," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (Brooklyn, New York), Sun, Jul 15, 1894, 18.

⁹ "Genius at Home: The Artwork of Mrs. Virginia Chandler Titcomb," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*

¹⁰ "Women Take Up His Case," *The Brooklyn Citizen*

¹¹ "Mrs. V.C. Titcomb Dies Very Suddenly," *Brooklyn Times Union*

¹² "In Mrs. White's Memory," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (Brooklyn, New York), Thu, Nov 14, 1907, 4.

¹³ "Mrs. V.C. Titcomb Dies Very Suddenly," *Brooklyn Times Union*

¹⁴ "Maine Ski Areas Improve Service," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (Brooklyn, New York), Sun, Jan 9, 1949, 37.