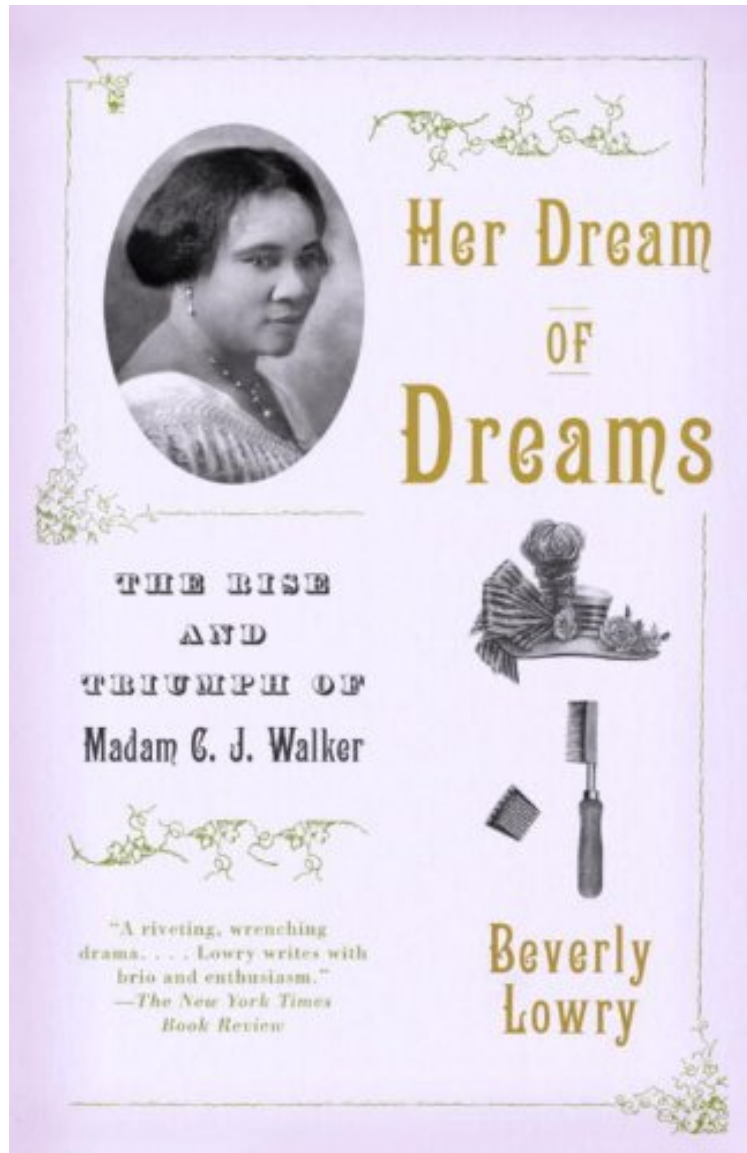


(Download free ebook) Her Dream of Dreams: The Rise and Triumph of Madam C. J. Walker

Her Dream of Dreams: The Rise and Triumph of Madam C. J. Walker

Beverly Lowry

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Beverly Lowry : Her Dream of Dreams: The Rise and Triumph of Madam C. J. Walker before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Her Dream of Dreams: The Rise and Triumph of Madam C. J. Walker:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By C. Ann Kershner Interesting reading. 9 of 11 people found the following review helpful. This book is a TRAVESTY. By A Customer I am not surprised at all by the

patronizing tone used by such reviewers as the person from "Houston, Texas USA" (probably a relative of Beverly Lowry) who complains that "It is a little bizarre to read reviews complaining that a second book about Madame C. J. Walker has been published. One of the measures of an individual's importance is the number of books they inspire..."The Houston reviewer continues in the same condescending tone about Alelia Bundles "whining" and asks, "Is there a rule that white guys can have a hundred books about them but Black women only get one each?" No, but thanks for your concern about black women and our history. The goal for any writer or scholar is to write a book when you have something to add to the information that is already available. It doesn't mean that you pretend that Madam Walker's biographer, her journalist great-great granddaughter Alelia Bundles, doesn't exist. The bottom line is that the definitive book on Madam C.J. Walker (*On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madam C.J. Walker*) has already been written and Lowry has not contributed to our understanding of this pioneer. Also, to add insult to injury, she manages to cast two other black women pioneers, Ida B. Wells and Mary McLeod Bethune, as women with "skin color like milk with a little tea in it. Their noses are aquiline, and some have soft hair." Mary McLeod Bethune had light skin and soft hair? Oh, okay! Lowry finally had to admit that her description of Bethune was "exaggerated", but still insisted that brown-skinned Ida B. Wells was "lightskinned" in the Sept-Oct 2003 issue of *Black Issues Book Reviews* where she admitted to other mistakes in her book. Bundles' book was a bestseller and she has no reason to be "jealous" of Lowry's sloppy scholarship, which is surprising considering her other work. Even though a reviewer in the *Wall Street Journal* thanked Lowry for "bringing Madam Walker back to us" and marveled that it was "astonishing that her name is all but forgotten today", Madam Walker has NEVER been "forgotten" by African-Americans. The only thing that should be forgotten is this book. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An Incredible Woman By Sparkle girl I rarely give a book 5 stars, but this one deserves it. I have read a ton of biographies, auto biographies and this is one of the best I have ever read in terms of detail. Any author that will track down the census records of the subject has my admiration. In addition, I can also recommend "The Black Rose". Having also read "On her own Ground" which is also good, "Her Dream of Dreams" is my particular preference. I approached this book in terms of Madam's standing as a cosmetic legend, like Helena Rubenstein or Mary Kay Ash, to learn about how she went from a washer woman to owning a fabulous mansion. No ordinary thing for a black woman in the early 1900's! What sets this book apart from the others is the information about the company. As a former beauty consultant, I was fascinated by the letter that was sent out to new prospective agents, on page 349 hardback. This gives you an idea into Madam's thinking. Quite a few biographies seem to speculate about the subject's life, especially where there's no clear information, so I found this one no different. In addition, I felt like I was going with her as she went from town to town selling her products and building her business. Her stamina was amazing. As you can tell, this review is as much about Madam as the book. As the other reviewer, I say read this book and make up your own mind.

"I am a woman that came from the cotton fields of the South; I was promoted from there to the wash-tub; then I was promoted to the cook kitchen, and from there I promoted myself into the business of manufacturing hair goods and preparations." --Madam C. J. Walker, National Negro Business League Convention, 1912 Now, from a writer acclaimed for her novels and the memoir *Crossed Over*, a remarkable biography of a truly heroic figure. Madam C. J. Walker created a cosmetics empire and became known as the first female self-made millionaire in this nation's history, a noted philanthropist and champion of women's rights and economic freedom. These achievements seem nothing less than miraculous given that she was born, in 1867, to former slaves in a hamlet on the Mississippi River. How she came to live on another river, the Hudson, in a Westchester County mansion, and in a New York City town house, is at once inspirational and mysterious, because for all that is known about the famous entrepreneur, much that occurred before her magnificent transformation—years that trace a circuitous route across the country—remains obscure. By breathing life into scattered clues and dry facts, and with a deep understanding of the times and places through which Madam Walker moved, Beverly Lowry tells a story that stretches from the antebellum South to the Harlem Renaissance and bridges nearly a century of our history in her search for the distant truths of a woman who defied all odds and redefined conventional expectations. "Wherever there was one colored person, whether it was a city, a town, or a puddle by the railroad tracks, everybody knew her name." --Violet Davis Reynolds, *Stenographer, Madam C. J. Walker Co.* From the Hardcover edition.

From *Publishers Weekly* Sarah Breedlove was born in 1867 on the Louisiana plantation where her parents had been slaves, was motherless by age seven, married and a mother by 14, and a widow at 20. After leaving the plantation and working as a Mississippi washerwoman, she headed for St. Louis, another way-station on her journey to becoming Madam C.J. Walker, the first black woman millionaire. In 1905, Breedlove was still washing other people's clothes; in 1919, Madam Walker died in her magnificent mansion on New York's Hudson River. Whether through a vision or stealth and science (i.e., possibly copying Annie Turbo's Poro hair care products for black women), Breedlove developed an ointment that, together with her improvements of the straightening comb, took her from rags to riches. But she left little in the way of a literary legacy. "We have to find her," notes Lowry, a novelist and author of *Crossed Over: A Memoir, a Murder*, "in stories and legends, in marriage certificates, deeds, interviews, insurance maps, city

directories... scraps of information alongside allegations and patently untrue tales." And that's where Lowry loses her. By the time the author has stacked up all the detritus, readers are left with a hill of rather dry beans. Into a stew of "doubtless," "perhaps," "maybe," "would almost certainly" and "I imagine," Lowry tosses in such background material as information on St. Louis's kindergarten system (which Breedlove's daughter did not attend), yet offers less than we need to know about the historically significant black women's clubs and their leaders (whose paths cross hers). Lapses into sentimentality ("The wakened child stirs but will not rise") do not clarify matters. Along with 10 bw photos, scholars will undoubtedly find Lowry's voluminous reportage about the contradictions in various accounts very valuable, but the precise character of Walker's dream of dreams is significantly less illuminated. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Another account of the woman born to former slaves who made it big with her special hair tonics. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Lowry inserts herself and her research process into this absorbing biography of Madame Walker, America's first black woman millionaire. This technique only adds to the incredible journey of Sarah Breedlove (Walker's original name) from abject poverty through virulent racism and Jim Crow laws to the height of business success with her hair-care products for black women. Using research, historical accounts, speeches, interviews, and biographical sketches, Lowry conveys Walker's ambition and determination. The order is generally chronological, but topical as well, as she diverts from the chronology to detail Walker's later life and the social, political, and economic context of the times. Here are the basic facts of Walker's life from laundress to entrepreneur, her failed marriages and mostly single motherhood, her marketing strategies, and famous contretemps with Booker T. Washington, as well as the racial politics of accommodation versus assertiveness and Walker's involvement in antilynching campaigns. But Lowry's meticulous research invites readers to consider differing accounts of Walker's early life, how she started her company, and the more profligate life of her daughter A'Le'ia. Vanessa Bush Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved