IDORA MCCLELLAN PLOWMAN MOORE'S "BETSY HAMILTON" IN AN ALABAMA BACKWOODS SETTLEMENT

By

Gail Waller

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Auburn University at Montgomery

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Liberal Arts

Montgomery, Alabama

18 November 2008

APPROVED

Thesis Director

Second Reader

Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank Dr. Benjamin B. Williams for introducing me to Idora McClellan Moore and her character Betsy Hamilton, two fascinating women in the history of southern literature. I also wish to thank my thesis director, Professor Nancy Anderson, and my second reader, Dr. Barbara Wiedemann. Thanks also to Dr. Randal Woodland at the University of Michigan-Dearborn for his insight and support; Judith Lavender and the other dedicated members of the Talladega Historical Society; Carey Heatherly at the University of Montevallo library; the extremely helpful and knowledgeable staff of the Manuscripts Department at the Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; the staffs at the Auburn University at Montgomery, Auburn University, University of Georgia libraries; the Talladega and Atlanta-Fulton County Public libraries and the Public Library of Anniston-Calhoun County; the Alabama Department of Archives and History; the Talladega County Probate Office; the Georgia Archives; and the Atlanta History Center. Special thanks to John and Sandy Berry for their hospitality and generous assistance in Talladega County. Finally, more thanks than I can express in words are due to my husband, Tom Cagle, who has lived cheerfully with Idora and Betsy for many months and has never flagged in his active support for this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

"The reputation of the actual southern backwoods is itself a history-rich narrative of long standing, but the transformation of that literal geography by a wondrous and often lying imagination has always been a better one."

James H. Justus, Fetching the Old Southwest, 2004

Idora McClellan Plowman Moore, writing as Betsy Hamilton, published scores of sketches in newspapers and magazines during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and a few in the early 1900s. Her character sketches rendered two groups of people faithfully in dialect: Negroes, or darkies as the terminology of her day called them, and the backwoods hill country people of central Alabama, or crackers. Her backwoods sketches are much more numerous than the "darky" sketches. Her only book, Southern Character Sketches, is a compilation of some of her stories and was self-published in 1921 and republished after her death by her stepdaughter.[1] Having published in an Atlanta weekly newspaper, The Sunny South, for some two years, she was "discovered" by Joel Chandler Harris and hired by Henry Grady, editor of the Atlanta Constitution to provide stories, alongside those of Harris himself and of Georgia humorist Bill Arp (Charles H. Smith's pseudonym), that would help boost the newspaper's

[1] Moore's Southern Character Sketches was published in Richmond, Virginia, in 1921 by Dietz under Moore's pen name, Betsy Hamilton. Moore's stepdaughter Julia Moore Smith revised and abbreviated the book, and Dickert published it in 1937 in Atlanta as Betsy Hamilton: Southern Character Sketches.

circulation. Despite the extreme popularity of her weekly newspaper columns, occasional magazine articles, and standing-room-only "entertainments" (recitations of her sketches, in costume and in character), Idora McClellan Plowman Moore is little known in the twenty-first century. Her work has not been anthologized. Little biographical information about her has been published, and most of that appears to be rehashes of a few early sources that were not always accurate. The only biography to date is Louise Burke McCain's 1934 thesis, Idora McClellan Moore: A Biographical Sketch Including Selections of Her Writings. Newspaper, magazine, and journal articles, as well as entries in academic works on local color and humor writing, include general information but little in the way of details. The original biographical sketch that most later sources depend on is short on specifics and long on sentiment.

Even less literary criticism on Moore's work is available. Kathryn Burgess McKee's 1997 dissertation, Writing in a Different Direction: Women Authors and the Tradition of Southwestern Humor proposes that Moore's work, along with that of Sherwood Bonner, Mary Noailles Murfree, and Ruth McEnery Stuart, is a new genre that transitions between the old Southwest humorists and local color. She also suggests that Moore's Familiar Letters series is pure old Southwest humor although her later work falls more into the transitional genre. Benjamin Williams, in his Literary History of Alabama and in an article in the Alabama Historical Quarterly, "'Betsy Hamilton': Alabama Local Colorist," provides basic biographical information and considers Moore a local color writer although he links her work directly to the old Southwest humorists. Some bibliographies and

literary and historical dictionaries and encyclopedias include Moore, but she is clearly shown as a minor figure, if she is named at all.

Moore's work was widely read when it was first published because it contained key elements popular with her audience: humor, romance, and, perhaps even more important, characters who reflected the human nature that readers saw in their own lives and could identify with. Moore also captured the sights and sounds—speech included—of times, places, and people who were passing out of the backwoods landscape even in the nineteenth century. Local color and dialect stories were popular in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and Moore's character and style, incorporating so many elements of old Southwest humor were fresh and interesting. Her characters were intriguing as well. Crackers were a popular character type in local color and humor writing, and travelogues and editorials reported on their appearance, homes, and lives in publications from Scientific American ("Clay Eaters") to Scribner's Monthly ("Great South") and Zion's Herald ("Among"). Moore's Familiar Letters sketches capture them in a sympathetic and entertaining fashion through the letters of a cracker girl, Betsy Hamilton.

Moore's first-person narrative, entirely in dialect, was also unusual; most local color writers—and the earlier Southwest humorists—used a narrator removed from the action to relate the story. Readers enjoyed Betsy Hamilton's down-to-earth depiction of the daily life and loves among the Hillabee community in weekly letters to her cousin Saleny Sidebottom and her sister Flurridy Tennysy. Few of the sketches tell a complete story; they were, after all, written as character

sketches, not stories. However, ongoing stories develop across a series of weekly letters, much like modern soap opera stories, and readers anxiously awaited the next installment in what amounts to an informal serial. The letters also depict, often in great detail, how the inhabitants of an Alabama hill country settlement lived, dressed, worked, played, ate, and worshipped. Louise Burke McCain claims that the stories are true and often use the names of real people Moore knew from the backwoods communities in Talladega County and Clay County, Alabama (56). Assuming their fidelity, the Familiar Letter sketches can be useful historical records as well as entertaining literary works.

Moore seldom wrote about current events, other than to place Betsy and her friends at a fair or exposition and to convey what she herself saw during her travels to visit family and friends in other states. She came of age during the Civil War; she entered adulthood and got married during Reconstruction; and her father, husband, and other male relatives were involved in local and state politics both before and after the war. However, her only known work that addresses those turbulent and difficult times is a piece about making and wearing a homespun dress at her graduation from Summerfield Academy in 1864, a patriotic act. Following the tradition of old Southwest humorists, Moore did not write in support of "southern sectionalism" (Ridgley ix). She stuck to the daily lives and loves of an Alabama backwoods settlement. In fact, Moore wrote remarkably little aside from her voluminous portfolio of character sketches. The only other pieces known to have been published are a feature on rag dolls, a discussion of the

merits of a novel about Negroes, a piece on industry, and a reminiscence about her childhood home.

Moore planned publication of a collection of her sketches in 1885, if not earlier. However, the book was so long in coming out that it was published well after the decline in popularity of local color stories. She was a sought-after writer in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and a popular speaker even during the first quarter of the twentieth century, but the popularity of her writing was waning even before the end of the nineteenth century and did not last beyond her lifetime.

This thesis provides an in-depth literary biography of Idora McClellan Plowman Moore that focuses on the biographical, historical, and literary experiences and influences that informed her writing. The thesis also examines the way she portrayed backwoods, or cracker, characters and settings in her Familiar Letters sketches, published between 1881 and 1884. Finally, it discusses the legacy that her character sketches leave for twenty-first century readers. Appendix A represents the first stage in identifying the sketches Moore reworked, often retitled, and republished—sometimes in the same venues as the original and sometimes in different ones. A chronological bibliography follows that lists all the sketches known to have been published about the character Betsy Hamilton. The bibliography of Moore's other published work the few sketches and articles she wrote that are not about Betsy Hamilton. The selected bibliography contains secondary resources and an unpublished poem by Moore.

Because Moore married twice and references to her by her last name alone could be confused with references to her husbands, father, and brothers, she and

her relatives are referred to by their first names when there could be any confusion. Otherwise, she is the primary McClellan, Plowman, and Moore named in the text. Likewise, because referring to her by her pseudonym could cause confusion with references to her main character of the same name, she is referred to, for the most part, by her real name.

CRACKERS IN SOUTHERN WRITING

The cracker figured heavily in both old Southwest humor and southern local color writing. Merriam-Webster defines cracker as "*usu disparaging*: a poor usu. Southern nickname" and, when capitalized, as "a native or resident of Florida or Georgia" ("Cracker," def. 5a and 5b). A 1934 Georgia newspaper article gives some of the history of the term: "The Century Dictionary states that a Cracker is: 'One of an inferior class of white hill dwellers in some of the southern United States, especially in Georgia and Florida. The name is said to have been applied because cracked corn is their chief article of diet; it is as old in Georgia and Florida as the time of the Revolution.'" The article gives three other explanations for the derivation of the word. First, hard-working Scots who emigrated to Georgia called the "lazy and trifling" settlers crackers, their word for idlers and boasters. Second, during the Revolutionary War, British soldiers "came to fear [. . .] the 'crack' of [Georgians'] rifles so much that they dubbed them Georgia Crackers." Third, the word could have derived from the cracking of whips as Georgia farmers drove their wagons to market ("Georgia Crackers").

"Cracker" is a term with varying usages. The people it refers to are always rural, but one end of the usage spectrum designates the poorest, laziest, most shiftless class of people imaginable while the other end refers to respectable yeoman farmers and middle-class rural inhabitants, and in between are the numerous poor whites—respectable and with a "remarkable sense of pride and dignity" but poor (Flynt, Poor ix). The term generally refers to "anyone who is rustic or awkward or out of date in dress, manner or speech" or anyone who lives "outside the town and villages" (Andrews 85).

While the term is probably most commonly associated with Georgia and Florida (the University of Georgia library's historical collection includes files on the "Georgia Cracker"), it is used throughout the South. Other states also have specific terms for their extremely poor inhabitants: Alabama's clay-eaters—so-called because of the habit of eating a greasy clay ("Clay Eaters")—South Carolina's sand-hillers, and North Carolina's dirt-eaters and tarheels, but poor white trash is a general descriptor at the bottom end of the class in most areas, and cracker is the general descriptor for anyone from poor white trash to respectable yeoman farmer or village inhabitant.

Crackers in Old Southwest Humor

The old Southwest was the frontier area south of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River. Old Southwest, or frontier, humor arose as early as colonial American days and flourished up to the 1860s. In the first half of the twentieth century, it was generally considered to have died out by the end of the

Civil War, although literary critics now consider elements in the work of some nineteenth-century writers, most notably Mark Twain, and of modern writers from William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, and Flannery O'Connor to Barry Hannah and Fred Chappell as direct legacies of old Southwest humor (Piacentino 9). Like the later local color movement in literature, old Southwest humor benefited from—in fact, flourished as a result of—newspaper publishers who sought humorous sketches and anecdotes for the entertainment of readers. This type of humor, for the most part, did not seek to highlight societal ills; it simply entertained, often through tall tales. The rough frontier characters are portrayed in light of their native cunning and essential goodness—or badness, as the case might be—and in their own colorful words.

The characters portrayed in old Southwest humor are often mountaineers, river men, and crackers, and they are generally portrayed as stock characters: true to the stereotype and usually with little or no individual character. The crackers range from rube farmers to trickster white trash, and some of them are, indeed, famously individual.

Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, one of the best-known southern humorists, was the first author to focus his sketches on "the 'cracker' in all his eccentricities," some of which he collected in Georgia Scenes in 1835. The scenes describe common activities such as fights, dances, and horse-swaps, and violence is a "common thread" (Ridgley 57). He pulls readers into his characters' idealized settings and lets them know these people and the way they live is respectable and

desirable, often more so than the urban setting to which the readers themselves are accustomed (Skaggs 28-29).

Major Jones, the 1842 creation of William Tappan Thompson, then editor of the Family Companion and Ladies' Mirror, is a genial militia major in a small Georgia town. His rustic character and his family and setting are revealed in letters to his friend Mr. Thompson. The novel Major Jones's Courtship consists of twenty-eight letters from Jones to Thompson. The letters are "unadorned" and "homely entertainment without a sting." The characters are not "odd" but instead are "unpolished country folk" (Tandy 93). Jones and his family and friends are "believable," and through their small stories, they show the "interior life" of their locale (Blair 64). Thompson published three collections: Major Jones's Courtship, Chronicles of Pineville, and Major Jones's Sketches of Travel between 1843 and 1848. The letters, although not written by a cracker could well have influenced Idora McClellan Moore's writing; at least one of her sketches closely parallels one of the scenes in Major Jones's Courtship.

Johnson Jones Hooper used his experience taking the 1840 census in Tallapoosa County, "an intrusion into the lives of the somewhat puzzled and sometimes resentful backwoods residents" to write "Taking the Census in Alabama" in 1842. He created "one of the most memorable rogues in all of American literature" (Cohen and Dillingham 253-54), Captain Simon Suggs, who believes "[i]t is good to be shifty in a new country" (Hooper 257). The dialect is reminiscent of later cracker stories. As a boy, Suggs bedeviled his mother's chickens and his hard-shell Baptist preacher father's horses on the family's

Georgia frontier farm, and Hooper, too, may well have influenced Moore's writing: Simon's father exhorts his wayward son to "go to the ant, thou sluggard," the topic of Brother Cole's memorable sermon related in one of Betsy Hamilton's Familiar Letters (Hooper 259).

Charles F. Noland's character Pete Whetstone, a true cracker from Arkansas, appeared in forty-five stories published in the New York Spirit of the Times in the 1840s and 1850s. Noland uses letters from Whetstone to Mr. Editor to convey his stories about hunting, fighting, horse racing, and rubes being taken advantage of by sharpsters. Dialect lends a picturesque character to Whetstone, and Noland avoids the use of a narrator to buffer the stories for readers, as many old Southwest humor writers did (Cohen and Dillingham 117).

George Washington Harris's infamous creation, Sut Lovingood, is an "East Tennessee rascal" and falls clearly in the cracker category. Harris "absorbed the idiom, folkways, and attitudes" of the mountaineers in the Cumberland Gap and Smoky Mountains where he grew up, and he relayed them in Sut Lovingood's dark version of survival of the fittest, with himself as the fittest "durndes' fool in the world" (Harris 217).

Hardin E. Taliaferro, who published his volume of Southwest humor under the pseudonym Skitt, was a North Carolina native and ordained preacher who lived in Talladega for a number of years. His humor focused on backwoods preachers and a poor white from Alabama, Ham Rachel. Ham is a loquacious, generous, and nosy character who raises cattle near Eufala and thinks highly of himself and his part of the country.

Crackers in Local Color Writing

Local color writing used the dialect and the structure of the anecdote and character sketch, but it "domesticated" the humor (Campbell 15). As the nation recovered from the trauma of the Civil War and Reconstruction, rural areas were succumbing to industrialization and urbanization, contributing to a general sense of change and uncertainty. By the 1880s, readers wanted "nostalgic" stories, remembering a "less complicated, a freer, even happier time" (Ridgley 90). As rural areas shrank and their ways of life and speech were lost, the local color movement aimed to preserve them in sketches and stories depicting the countryside, people, and language more or less faithfully. For its new audience—a wider one including women and young people—and its new purposes, local color stories had to lose the rough edges and wild characters of frontier humor. Eccentric was all right, but bawdy and immoral were not suitable for the new form. Stock characters were still common, and crackers were still popular subject matter, but they tended to move toward the yeoman farmer and poor white end of the cracker spectrum rather than the white trash end.

Local color stories appeared in national magazines such as Scribner's Monthly Magazine, the Atlantic Monthly, and the Colored American Magazine,. Some regional magazines and newspapers, such as the Land of Sunshine in Los Angeles and the Sunny South in Atlanta, had subscribers outside their immediate publication areas, and they focused on both news and entertainment. Fiction was prominent in these publications, and most was local color, some of it serialized

from nationally and internationally known authors. However, most of it was individual stories from both proven and rising authors. Subscribers to the national periodicals were largely urban dwellers who were already aware of national affairs, who traveled, and who were open to new ideas about their own and other areas of their growing nation. Local color authors who aspired to national prominence wrote to this largely eastern seaboard audience, and those who aspired to prestigious magazines—and the fees they paid—aimed for Harper's, Scribner's, the Century, and the Atlantic.

However, the writing these publications accepted fell strictly within specific guidelines for subject matter and treatment. Only the most innocent characters and pure speech were considered acceptable for the eyes of the presumed audience, "the 'young girl' and the family center table." Undesirable elements such as drinking, profanity, slang, or love interest portrayed as anything more ardent than a platonic relationship were simply not included in stories that passed muster. These publishers took seriously their role in providing suitable material for a "broad American" audience that had "undeveloped taste, [and was] easily influenced by the power of the churches, social mores, and publicity" (Cyganowski 15). Authors, regardless of the literary merit of their writing, toed the line in terms of subject matter or went unpublished in these magazines. The rough edge of cracker humor had to be softened, and the lighter side of life in the backwoods had to be portrayed.

Local color stories were not the exclusive province of the South and the West; fodder for local color could be found in every region of the country.

Southern stories, however, sprang from a part of the country that was seen as romantic. The North and the Midwest were known quantities to readers; the West was colorful but lacked "'charm.' [. . .] the South was cozy and 'home'" (Ridgley 90). In the 1880s, the South became "the most popular setting in American fiction" (Hubbell 701). Formerly an alien and enemy land, it was being brought back into the nation, and people were curious about the region.

Some Southern writers used their stories to perpetuate the myth of the Old South, of halcyon days on the old plantation, where life was good for everyone. Others ignored the plantation myth and wrote about their pockets of the Reconstruction South, of the backwoods, of small towns, or of cities such as New Orleans. Characters in these stories covered a wider range than those found a few years earlier in old Southwest humor, which relied on the extreme and the grotesque for humorous effect. Local color characters were types (crackers, mountaineers, Negroes, and so on), but they were also the ordinary men and women next door, "deeply rooted in their environment," but not necessarily extreme as character types (Dike 83). They ranged from poor whites to yeoman farmers, preachers, doctors, and lawyers and those men's wives and families.

The poor whites of southern local color fiction were seldom poor white trash, though. They were part of the "massive body of plain folk who were neither rich nor very poor" (Skaggs 19). Because they were capable of "a greater variety of actions" than slaves and freemen on the one hand, who were limited by the Negro stereotype, and the planter aristocracy on the other, who was limited to acting "nobly" by an "increasingly sacrosanct" stereotype, writers turned to the

wealth of opportunities offered by the variety of nonaristocratic and nontrashy white characters. Dialect allowed the characters in this middle ground to stand out and also to show their vices as well as

their virtues, thereby making them more realistic and less stereotypical to readers (Skaggs 21-23).

With a class of poor whites, or crackers, peopling local color stories, social status was shown not by wealth but by character: pride (in family, home, and way of life), courage, common sense, and hard work are character determiners. Hiram Ard, Harry Stillwell Edwards's east Tennessee farmer, is a "paragon" because he has all those characteristics, and Constance Woolson's characters exhibit strong pride in family (Skaggs 53-56).

Rufus Sanders, created by Francis Bartow Lloyd in the 1880s or 1890s, is a backwoods Alabama character. A Montgomery farmer, George S. Morrison, was the physical inspiration for Lloyd's crackerbox philosopher who is, like Major Jones and Betsy Hamilton, a mild and believable character whose reports of his doings reveal, bit by bit the world he lives in (Cory 9). Through Rufus Sanders, the "sage of Rocky Creek," Lloyd talks about his boyhood, politics, courting, and Christmas in a mix of light dialect and straight English. The title, and particularly the subtitle, of the collection Lloyd's wife put together after his murder in 1896 capture the essence of the sketches: Sketches of Country Life: Humor, Wisdom, and Pathos from the "Sage of Rocky Creek." The Homely Life of he Alabama Back Country Has Its Sunny Side: Rough But Wise and Kindly

Talk. The sketches are, for the most part, reminiscences and have no story line or particular relation to each other.

Language—dialect—is a key element of local color writing. Gavin Jones characterizes late nineteenth-century America as "crazy about dialect" to the point that "critics feared a virulent epidemic was contaminating the nation" (1). Maurice Thompson estimated in 1887 that four-fifths of short stories published in the best national periodicals were dialect stories ("American Dialect"). Dialect stories were so prevalent that disparaging comments and jokes about them began appearing in literary and popular magazines and newspapers as early as 1884 and continued through the early 1900s.

People in different parts of the country speak with different accents, often in altogether different dialects. Their portrayal was another facet of the local color stories' efforts in bringing the country together after the Civil War and in bringing a nostalgic version of rural America to urban readers, but getting those dialects onto paper presented a challenge to writers. Antebellum dialect stories were generally satiric or humorous and relied on "humorous misspellings of words that assaulted linguistic propriety for its own sake" (Jones 38). While some postbellum dialect stories were intentionally humorous, the tendency was toward realism in the subject matter and portrayal of the characters. While not all, perhaps not even many, writers adhered to a particularly faithful rendition of a region's accent or speech pattern, some did, such as James Russell Lowell, George W. Cable, George Washington Harris, Joel Chandler Harris, and Idora McClellan Moore. When portrayal of the dialect was true to its region, its appearance on the page

could be formidable to editors and readers alike. Even casual, inaccurate, and incomplete renditions of regional speech were almost incomprehensible to readers through gross (and arbitrary) misspellings, dropped letters, and the abundant use of apostrophes.

PART I

BECOMING "AUNT BETSY": A LITERARY BIOGRAPHY

"[O]n July 25, 1896, a newspaper in Anniston, Alabama, reported that she [Betsy Hamilton] drew a crowd of one thousand. There were nights when Mark Twain would have been thankful to have attracted half so many."

Kathryn McKee, "Southern Women Humorists," 2001

Idora McClellan Moore was born and raised near Talladega, Alabama, and, while she traveled extensively and lived for several years in Auburn, she spent most of her life in Talladega County. Her formative years were spent in the antebellum era, she came of age during the Civil War, and she began married life during Reconstruction. She knitted socks for soldiers in the Great War, and she saw the advent of the typewriter, the automobiles, and electricity. Despite these large events in her life, though, she wrote on a small scale. Her characters are common people: Negroes and backwoods folk. Her subject matter is the stuff of everyday life, and despite the privation and difficulties she experienced, or perhaps because of them, her treatment of it is humorous. All her material, much of it reportedly true stories, was drawn from her life in and around Talladega and from her visits to friends and relatives. Her main character, the cracker girl Betsy Hamilton, became her pseudonym, and she was better known by that name than by her own.

A PRIVILEGED ANTEBELLUM CHILDHOOD

Elizabeth Idora McClellan was born on her father's plantation, Idlewild, on October 31, 1843[1]; she often joked about being born on Halloween, saying she was "a gift of the 'witches' and not of the gods, else she might have been named Theodora" (Willis 1). Her father, General William Blount McClellan, was born in Knox County, Tennessee, in 1798. He was a Tennessee Volunteer under Stonewall Jackson and one of the first settlers in the area that became Talladega County. After gradually moving south from Tennessee,[2] he bought three thousand acres in the Choccolocco valley, about four miles from the site Talladega would occupy, in about 1830, two years before Talladega County was established by the Alabama legislature and officially opened for settlement. He paid cash to the Indians he bought the land from—beads and whiskey were the customary payment at the time, although some settlers just squatted without paying—and he built a large brick, Colonial-style house for his growing family.

General McClellan, who attended the United States Military Academy, was well known in the community; he was named guardian for children whose fathers had died (they were considered orphans even when the mother was living), and he took legal responsibility for business owners who were absent for extended periods of time. In 1836 he was elected brigadier-general of the Sixteenth

---

[1] Bobbie Jones McLane lists her birth year as 1844; however, all other biographical sources, including the handwritten biographical sketch by one of her stepdaughters that includes material which appears to have been dictated by Moore, show the year as 1843.

[2] The McClellans lived first near his family at Somerfield in Morgan County, Alabama. By March 1832 they were at Idlewild plantation in Talladega County, where thirteen of their sixteen children were born.

Brigade, the militias in Talladega, Clay, and Randolph counties. Only a wealthy man could have taken on that responsibility: "The gold braid, tinsel, brass buttons, epaulettes and other military equipments of a military brigade officer in the early days cost a small farm and [. . .] our horny-handed pioneers looked like a cross between an aurora borealis and a Christmas tree when in full military dress" (Vandiver, I 84). General McClellan was unusual in his fully equipping himself with the uniform and accoutrements of his rank and in taking the trouble to attend any of his battalion's reviews (Garrett, W. 599-600). Even so, considered "cool, practical, and brave," he was not considered to be "much given to drilling his battalion, [. . .] but when the old man would lead they would follow, 'even to the cannon's mouth' (Saunders 189). In keeping with this reputation, for as long as he had access to whiskey after the Civil War broke out, he supplied the men in his militia with a drink after their drills (McCain 6). In 1837 he was elected as one of the newly formed Talladega County's representatives to the state legislature, and in 1838 he was elected to the state senate. He served as Engrossing Clerk of the Alabama House of Representatives for ten years; he was responsible for the final writing of bills under consideration, incorporating all amendments before they were passed into law.

Idlewild was a large, successful plantation that supported a large family. Idora was the eleventh child of sixteen. She had six sisters (Amanda Olivia, Mary Wallace, Martha Roby, Sarah Etheldra, Magnolia Vinton, and Laura Worth) and nine brothers (Alden Patridge, Marcus, John, Francis Albert, William White, Augustus Roby, Henry Clay, Walter Groce, and John Marcus). The McClellans

were a hospitable family, frequently putting up visiting friends and family. Judge J. Wellington Vandiver, a friend of the family, said about Idlewild, "'No home in all the country was more delightful or more hospitable. It was the ambition of every young man of my day to go there courting the beautiful 'Betsy' ("Idora"), her lovely sisters, or their guests. It was a charming home, and a delightful household'" (qtd. in Garner 1). The McClellans hosted parties and horseback rides, and Idora was an excellent horsewoman. A visitor to the house described a winding staircase of ebony, Bohemian glass fanlights over the front door, and sweeping lace curtains. A verse over the front door read:

> The lintel low enough to keep out pomp and pride,
> The threshold high enough to turn deceit aside,
> The door band strong enough from robbers to defend,
> This door will open at a touch to welcome every friend. (Garner 1)

McClellan was an observant child and later remembered in great detail experiences from daily life in the house and in the fields that enabled her to write scenes conveying the "humorous and pathetic picture of life in slave-times" ("Betsy Hamilton," ms. 1). The family often summered at Chandler Springs, where a hotel (which became derelict and was demolished or burned in the 1930s) housed people who came to take the waters and escape the heat of the Coosa River Valley. McClellan continued her observation of life around her, including that of the backwoods people in the area.

General McClellan was said to have looked like "Santa Claus with his red face and long white whiskers and his short, fat body (McCain 5). In 1900, Moore

published, "at the request of and read before the Highland City Book Club of Talladega," a reminiscence, Christmas on the Old Time Plantation (1). Her description of Christmas at Idlewild includes the generous hospitality common to the time and place: the large house overflowed with friends and family. Presents were given mainly to the children, and they were usually homemade (5-7). Christmas day was celebrated exuberantly:

> Celebration of Christmas morning began "long before daylight [. . . .] at the negro quarters; the ringing of the big yard bell, used in calling the hands from the field, the blowing of cow's horns, prepared for the occasion, the bursting of hog bladders which had been blown up and hung from the joist logs in their cabins since the hogs were killed, [. . .] the popping of fire crackers, gifts from the white children, the playing of fiddles and banjoes, blowing on quills and combs, and Jews harps, beating on old tin pans. (8)

Everyone from the quarters would all "come running to the 'Big House' where they had the privilege of surprising everybody in it from 'Old Marster and Old Mistis' down to the smallest child" with shouts of "Chris'mas gif Mistis! Chris'mas Gif' Marster! Chris'mas gif; all y'all chil'en! I done cotch you fus' and de fus one ketched is

de fus' one to give!" All the Negroes received presents in return (8-9). The holidays were also a time of "dinings, suppers, surprise parties, and dancing

parties, at which the negroes generally furnished the music with fiddles and banjoes" and the guests played old-fashioned games. Horseback riding was a popular pastime, and courtship was a common accompaniment to the festivities, with engagements for marriage often resulting. The Negroes as well "had their frolics every night" with participants from nearby plantations and frequently lasting "till broad daylight in the morning." Weddings in the quarters were often held at Christmas, sometimes in the Big House. There was always a big supper, and guests, Negro and white alike, were invited from all the neighboring plantations. The Negro women pieced quilts all year long from scraps left from the white children's clothing and quilted them at Christmas: "The quilt was tacked to the frames and swung from the joists logs, [. . .] and as each side was quilted it was rolled to the center, the quilt was then ripped from the frames and thrown over the head of one of the girls as a signal that she would be the next bride." Quiltings usually ended with a supper and a dance; the Negroes practiced "break down" dancing, as the crackers did (14-16).

McClellan was an inventive child; when she was about twelve years of age, she visited friends in the country and saw a slave making fly brushes from peacock feathers. She was fascinated, so the woman gave her some feathers, and she made her own brush. When she returned home, she used feathers from her family's peacocks to make "a large brush to keep the flies off of [the] dining-table. The brush had a long handle and a little negro [sic] boy stood at the side and waved it across the table." A dinner guest admired it and bought it from her for five dollars. That was McClellan's first recognition that she "could in any way

earn money or would need any except what father provided [. . .]. In those days, women, as a rule did not work for money." McClellan, however, continued making the fly brushes and sold them through a milliner in Talladega, earning more than three hundred dollars ("Betsy Hamilton," ms. 6-7).

Given General McClellan's prosperity and the schooling he provided for at least his daughter Idora, it is probable that a wide variety of newspapers, periodicals, and books would have been available for the family's reading, and the newspapers and periodicals of the day contained a good deal of fiction. For the most part, Alabama newspapers published primarily moralistic stories and melodramas set in exotic locales, historical fiction about the Revolutionary War, frontier humor, poems, and essays. Regional periodicals were, for the most part, short-lived but by the 1850s were focused on regional issues and separating themselves from the political stand taken by northern periodicals. Romance stories and the British classics were strongly favored. Jay Hubbell, chairman of the Editorial Board of American Literature, calls the South before the Civil War "comparatively speaking, a more important book market than it is today. [. . .] Southern readers helped to make the reputations and increase the earnings of Irving, Cooper, Longfellow, Melville, and many another Northern writer" (xi).

Further, a private library was "essential" to educated planters (Hubbell 355-56). Most towns and settlements had at least one bookseller, and newspapers and magazines advertised the latest books available from publishers nationwide. Southerners had access to the same reading material available in the North—

except, of course, during the Civil War and afterward, when money for new books was scarce.

Reading for entertainment and education was as important during and after the war as it had been before it. The 1864 publication of Augustus Baldwin Longstreet's Master William Mitten was advertised in Talladega's Democratic Watchman (and presumably in other newspapers throughout the South), with copies of the book to be sent "post paid to any part of the Confederacy" ("New Advertisements"), and literary magazines and journals resumed publication in the South immediately following the war. The Talladega Reporter advertised receipt of the first issue of The Ladies Home, a "new literary journal" published in Atlanta and "filled with Novelettes, Tales, Sketches, Essays, incidents of the war, etc." and "devoted to the varied interests of Southern womanhood" ("Advertisement"). The Weekly Visitor, "devoted to choice literature, romance, news and commercial intelligence" advertised the December 1865 commencement of its publication, promising "literary merit and mechanical execution inferior to no family paper published in the United States" ("Southern Literary Journal").

Women writers would have been part of the literary traditions that influenced McClellan as she grew to adulthood: By 1850, women were an important part of the book-buying public, and the number of women writers was increasing (Hubbell 603). In 1855, Nathaniel Hawthorne ranted to his publisher about "'a d__d mob of scribbling women' who had taken over the public's reading sensibilities" (qtd. in Hubbell 603). In the 1840s and 1850s, "there were [.

. .] more women than men among Southern writers who could be classed as professional," although few came from planter families (Hubbell 603).

Newspapers in particular had been important outlets for literary works in the old Southwest frontier, and they published a surprising quantity of literary material, including poetry. Alabama editors focused on "native fiction" and provided examples of old Southwest humor that McClellan could have read at home in the 1840s and 1850s (Hubbell 622-23). Humorous sketches by Longstreet, Hooper, and Baldwin were published in newspapers, almanacs, and a well-known sportsman's magazine, The Spirit of the Times.

A BOARDING SCHOOL EDUCATION

McClellan was educated at home by her mother, Martha Roby McClellan from Wilkes County, Georgia, who taught her daughters the domestic skills important to southern girls of the day such as cooking and sewing. Martha McClellan died in January 1858, when she was forty-eight; her children ranged in age from three to thirty-two, and seven of them were under the age of sixteen. In February 1860, General McClellan married Mary Ann Stout[3], who continued the children's education.

McClellan attended the Presbyterian Synodical Collegiate Female Institute of Talladega for four years, starting in about 1858. The school had been founded in 1850 on the site of a school for girls built in 1835. The Alabama Synod of the Presbyterian Church operated the institute; in 1850, it had "a 70 by 35-foot

[3] Louise Burke McCain names General McClellan's second wife as Mary Ann Street, but The McClellans of Alabama and Arkansas, a detailed family history published by the Washington County Historical Society in Arkansas, names her as Mary Ann Stout.

chapel, three school rooms, two music rooms, a library and a large lecture room and laboratory." The school sessions lasted five months, and the cost to students was ten to fifteen dollars a year (Anderson).

Many academies and seminaries did not have boarding facilities, and students boarded with nearby families for fourteen or fifteen dollars a month, which included fuel, lights, and washing (Boatwright 17); McClellan boarded with Mrs. T. L. Best in Talladega. She created her character Betsy Hamilton while she was at school and used the name in games at school to such an extent that it became her nickname. She was not considered a "beauty," but she "possessed a wit and charm" and was "an apt pupil" and a class "leader." Her dramatic talents guaranteed her a "following" eager for stories and imitations of the negroes at Idlewild (McCain 6-7). General McClellan's "ambitions" for his daughter spurred him to send her to the Methodist Centenary Institute in Summerfield, near Selma, Alabama (there is no mention of how his ambitions for his other children played out) (McCain 7). In fact, most of the planter class, the "elite," ensured their daughters had educations "that far exceeded mere literacy" (Censer 13).

Both schools McClellan attended were typical for their time and place. In the three decades before the Civil War, education in the South was on the upswing, primarily in academies, denominational colleges, and universities rather than public schools and primarily in towns rather than in rural areas. Academies, some of which were coeducational and most of which were nonsectarian, generally emphasized religion, patriotism, and morals and provided instruction in "practical subjects" as well as reading, declamation, and literature. Postsecondary

education was almost as common for women in the South after the Civil War as it was for men; the South had "forty-two of the fifty-six women's colleges established during the period [ending in 1870]," and the number of women educated was nearly that of men (Hubbell 346). Southern colleges, whose academic standards were lower than those of the Ivy League schools but similar to those of other northern and western colleges, "trained few scholars in the modern sense, but they contributed much to the widely diffused general knowledge noted by visitors from the outside" (Hubbell 347). However, the standard of education for women was lower than for men. While some of the basic material was the same for both, women's education also included instruction on "ornamentals" such as painting, drawing, singing, and needlework—not as training to develop a talent or interest but to fit young women for their place in genteel society. And while more serious subject matter such as chemistry, trigonometry, or ancient and modern history might have been listed in a school's curriculum, its chances of actually being taught to women were low in many schools (Boatwright 12-14).

WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

McClellan graduated in June 1864, when she was twenty-three years old, from the Centenary Institute in a class of twenty-eight. Louise Burke McCain describes the school, whose motto was, "to educate women is to refine the world" (8). The institute advertised for students on a regular basis in the Talladega newspaper, even during the war, presumably because of the direct rail line

between the two towns. In 1863, board was forty-five dollars a month; tuition and music were each fifty dollars a term (the school year consisted of three three-month terms); and Latin and French, instrumental music, and drawing and painting required additional fees of five to ten dollars each. Cost for one term could be as much as $325, a large sum during wartime ("Centenary College"). By the fall of 1866, fees had dropped by more than forty percent, and modern languages had been added to the curriculum ("Centenary Female"). In 1864, the institute's report card had places for grades in arithmetic, English, grammar, composition, algebra, geometry, physiology, geography of the heavens, Latin, French, rhetoric, music (instrumental and vocal), and deportment. The school's regime would appear strict to twenty-first-century students: Holidays were few, and corporal punishment was acceptable for girls up to twelve and boys up to fifteen; girls were punished for "walking on the lovely terraces of the front campus." Jewelry other than "plain breast pins" was prohibited on the basis of being "an evil both unnecessary and expensive." Students read compositions and delivered recitations two mornings a week and in the evenings. Evenings also saw "musical concerts and addresses by distinguished visitors." Annual examinations lasted for four days and were public; the students answered questions from a committee (McCain 8-11).

The schools in Talladega struggled but remained open during the war. The Alabama Institute for the Blind and Deaf, the Synodical College (McClellan's alma mater), a primary school, a school for boys outside town, and a class of girls whose teacher provided thread bought with her school earnings and "filled a

government contract for 500 pairs of socks" (Stephens 4) were all in session. Both the Synodical College and the school at Blue Eye, where McClellan would teach some fifteen years later, advertised in the newspapers for students during this period.

McClellan returned to Idlewild after graduating from the Centenary Institute in June 1864 and was, presumably, at home both when one of her father's outbuildings was burned in a Union army raid on Talladega in July 1864, destroying cotton and wheat and when a Yankee raiders swept up the Choccolocco Valley, burning, destroying, and raiding homes and businesses in April 1865 just before the Confederacy surrendered.[4] McClellan's future father-in-law, George Plowman, then mayor of Talladega, barely escaped being hanged, and her brother Dr. Alden P. McClellan lost most of his draft animals The area suffered heavy losses of "horses and mules, corn and fodder and bacon, which [. . .] deprive[d] many of the means of making crops" and made life extremely difficult for many of the area's residents throughout the following year ("Raid"). The 1864 raid had been preceded by news of it, so residents had been able to hide their valuables and remove county records to safety. In December 1864, the few men and boys McClellan knew who were not already in the army were exhorted to "go at once to Mobile" to provide auxiliary assistance against an expected attack ("To the Men").

According to Mrs. E. A. Stephens, the daughter of Talladega probate judge William H. Thornton, the town "resembled Goldsmith's Deserted Village" during the war: "The principal inhabitants were women, children and servants, a

[4] An account of the first raid is in "Gin House Burned." The second is in "The Raid."

few non-combatants; the county officers, preachers and doctors and a few old men who were notable for field duty" (3). One of the hotels was used as a hospital, and a carriage shop was making looms and other weaving equipment. A training camp for army conscripts sat on the edge of town. There was one saloon, one bank, and two newspapers, which were printed on whatever kind of paper could be found and sometimes consisted of only one sheet as paper of all kinds became scarce. Citizens who received letters after a battle shared them with others since news from the front came infrequently. Mrs. Stephens's husband wrote almost daily and "frequently mentioned the boys from home," passing on news about them to their families. Albert Plowman, McClellan's future husband, was one of those he sent news home about, saying he was "all right" after a battle (Stephens 3-4).

No clubs met in town, and there were no social functions. Most of the women were too busy for frivolity in any case, clothing their families—carding, spinning, coloring, weaving, and sewing. Sewing was mostly by hand since few sewing machines were available, and spool thread for them was not available anyway. Stephens wove five to ten yards of cloth a day and knitted socks and stockings until ten or eleven p.m. since she "had 12 at home and two in the army to be clothed." Stephens's father was very hospitable, and his home's "spare rooms and hall floors [were often] covered with pallets," his guests eating the best food available at two daily meals: "corn bread, bacon and sorghum molasses, butter and milk, [. . .] coffee made of sweet potatoes, wheat and rye, sweetened

with sorghum. [. . .] The best substitute [. . .] for coffee was okra seed" (Stephens 5).

A Georgia woman called the war years "the times which tried men's souls and taxed women's ingenuity" because of the "peculiarity of the feminine mind" that makes "a new fashion in dress [. . .] always a diversion" even in times that "distress or trouble" (Georgia 79). The northern blockade of southern ports had made store-bought or smuggled goods—if they were even available—too dear for "the average school girl." Moore describes how she and her school friends wore dresses "renovated and remodeled" from their mothers', grandmothers', and great-grandmothers' old silk, worsted, and muslin dresses "brought out from the musty depths of old hair trunks and cedar chests." The dresses were "aired, and ripped, and turned upside own [sic], hind part before and wrong side out" or "combine[d] as trimmings to give a new effect." The girls took "secret pleasure" in "cheating some one [sic] into the belief that the goods had 'run the blockade' and cost an enormous sum of confederate money" (Hamilton, "Wartime").

In "A Wartime Commencement in Dixie," Moore describes the angst the Centenary Institute's students suffered over what to wear at their graduation in 1864. Realizing the students had little chance of acquiring the usual finery, their "beloved and considerate teacher" suggested they "'throw a garment around [themselves] that would make Jefferson Davis tip his hat' [. . .] it must be of the confederate [sic] homespun, home-woven goods, made from the home-grown cotton, and dyed with the home dyes, and fashioned at home by the hands of [their] own mothers and sisters." The story describes in great detail some of the

techniques for making clothing that could be mistaken, at least at a distance, for fancy store-bought dresses.

Clothing is the only wartime topic Moore wrote about. Homespun was a necessity, and wearing it became a badge of patriotism. Brides wore homespun dresses, "old time linsey woolsey made with [their] own hands," hats made from straw "grown on [their] father's farm," and "Confederate cloaks" also made of homespun ("Wedding"). Moore was proud of her graduation dress, her first homespun dress, and was pleased that her stepmother and the slaves at Idlewild had done such a fine job making it that some of her friends lost wagers on the dress's being store-bought (Hamilton, "Wartime"). Confederate women considered wearing homespun a contribution they could make to the war effort, and "The Homespun Dress," sung to the tune of "Bonnie Blue Flag," became a battle song. One version of the song's history is that an Alabama soldier, Lt. Harrington, wrote the words, inspired by the ladies in homespun at a ball he attended in Lexington, Kentucky, honoring the soldiers of his unit (Merritt). Another version names Carrie Belle St. Claire, a Georgia poet, as the composer, and she, too, was inspired by the homespun dresses at a ball honoring Confederate soldiers (Walden).

During the war, McClellan made willow baskets, cardboard baskets covered with fabric, wax fruit and flowers, and quilts, one of which "contained thirty-six hundred hexagon-shaped pieces" to make do in place of goods no longer available. She made paper flowers as hat trimming, and she "also made and trimmed the hats" ("Betsy Hamilton" ms. 11). Sewing and knitting were never-

ending tasks, and short reminders in the newspaper asked ladies, "Are you knitting socks for the soldiers? Remember that winter is coming" ("Article").

Moore's Christmas reminiscence is set before the war. Mildred Lewis Rutherford wrote a Christmas reminiscence that closely parallels Moore's as well as one that describes a plantation Christmas in the last winter of the Civil War. Her mammy told her she need not hang her stocking because "Santa Claus could not cross Marse Sherman's lines," but her mother had saved and made small items for Christmas, so the stockings were hung after all. Rutherford used one of her father's hardtack biscuits, made with "nothing but flour, salt and water," to hammer the nails for the stockings (27). On Christmas morning, the stockings contained rag dolls with real hair curls (that strongly resembled the children's hair), homespun dresses, and morocco shoes "just like our shoes used to be"; plaited molasses candy baskets filled with salted peanuts, benne (sesame) seed candy; ginger cakes cut in various human and animal shapes; pop corn balls; an apple; black walnuts; scaly barks; hickory nuts; roasted chestnuts; and pulled candy "put into a corn shuck to make it look like an ear of corn" (28). The slaves received homespun clothing and a new pair of shoes, and there was "plenty of good hog meat." The family sent a brother in the army a box "filled with fruit cake, [. . .] ginger bread, beaten biscuits, peach pickles, cherry pickles, blackberry, scuppernong and apple jellies, and other good things" that included a quilt, some shirts, mufflers, socks, and gloves (29).

MARRIED LIFE AND WIDOWHOOD

One of the many young men courting the McClellan sisters was the "slender, well dressed" Albert White Plowman, a Talladega lawyer with "charming ways and manners" (McCain 14). McClellan married him on December 19, 1866, and moved to the town house he had built in about 1850, located in what is now the Silk Stocking District of Talladega. Massive oaks, cedars, and magnolias still surround the mansion, and its slave quarters, carriage house (now a garage), and a roofed and walled-in cistern with pump are intact.

Albert Plowman had served in the 51st Alabama Cavalry during the Civil War and saw frequent, arduous, and deadly action. The unit was "composed of some very hard riding men who adapted to wartime demands with great zeal"; its assignment as the war was coming to an end was harassing Sherman's troops in the Carolinas. Plowman was paroled in Charlotte, North Carolina, when the war ended (Miller 96).

He was reportedly "witty" and a "brilliant" lawyer, but ill health "tended to retard" his success in business. He suffered from rheumatism and drank heavily to relieve the pain, but his wife is said to have "made allowances for all his weaknesses."

Since Plowman did not make much money from his law practice, he "avoided paying any debt he could escape." Judge Wellington Vandiver witnessed Albert's feigning an "insane spell" to prevent a Negro's collecting a one-dollar debt from him and indicated that "many of his debts were settled in ways similar to that" (McCain 16). The Familiar Letters contain frequent

references to drunkenness on the part of Betsy's father and to Betsy's love for and care of him when he is drunk. Betsy's maw is less willing than Betsy to excuse his lapses or to take care of him when he is drunk, but she stands by her marriage vows. Given the divergent views of Betsy and Maw, readers may wonder how own husband's frequent and public drunkenness affected Idora Plowman.

The couple did not have much money, and Plowman had always believed "money saved [was] money earned." She "earned" money by learning how to make men's and women's clothing so they looked "as though a tailor had made them," including hats, caps, slippers, socks, gloves, ties, handkerchiefs, and underclothing ("Betsy Hamilton," ms. 10-11). She incorporated that philosophy in her writing as well: Betsy's friend Caledony writes Betsy's cousin Saleny in Familiar Letters No. 107 that she has made her own ink at no cost because "a dime saved is a dime made."

In 1872, the Plowmans went to Riddle's Mill, a few miles from Talladega, intending to stay for several months during the summer in hopes that Albert's health would improve. Set on Talladega Creek, Riddle's Mill ground wheat and corn. The finishing room upstairs was a large room and was used for church services and dances

that "young people from many miles around" would come to. It was an active spot, popular with people from Talladega, who came for the mineral water at nearby Riddle's Mill Spring. Cabins on the surrounding hillsides were available for rent in addition to

rooms in the mill (Blackford 54). A blacksmith, cotton gin, and sawmill stood on Talladega Creek alongside the mill. The mill is a restaurant now, but its rooms are intact, and some of the hillside cabins are still standing.

Residents of backwoods settlements in nearby counties would travel together in a "crowd" to Talladega to shop, and they would break their trips to and from town at Riddle's Mill; people would also camp in the mill yard while waiting for their corn and wheat to be ground. On these occasions, the mill grounds were the "scene of shooting contests, horseshoe pitching, and other sports," and "impromptu" dances were held, with the Riddles playing the piano and fiddle ("Town"). Nineteenth-century educator Emily Burke, who taught in Georgia cracker settlements, describes such a trip:

> [T]hey take their mules and fasten them with a parcel of white cords to a little covered cart with one pair of wheels . . . then load them with chickens, ducks, geese, hominy, and perhaps a swine or two, or a wild deer; lastly, they put in their cooking utensils, not only to be used on the way, but also in the city to save the expense of loding [sic] at an inn.
>
> . . .
>
> When night comes, they stop on the wayside, detach their mules from their burden and turn them into the woods to see their food, while they make preparations for their supper. First they gather up parcels of dried leaves and old limbs of trees, with which to build a fire, and then proceed

> to make coffee and boil their hominy . . . creep into their carts for a night's repose (Emily Burke qtd. in Boatwright 93).

Idora Plowman spent time listening and talking to these visiting backwoods inhabitants and "often took down their conversations later." They apparently liked her as much as she did them; they "wanted to tell her all about themselves." At the end of the summer, the couple decided to stay on at Riddle's Mill, and in all, they spent two years there. Plowman wrote about "people and events that had amused her" there (McCain 17); her first published sketch came from this stay, and she continued to write the sketches "as a diversion to amuse her friends" (McCain 18). She also included both Riddle's Mill and Chandler's Mill in her sketches: Betsy, George, Jinsy, and Pap camp out at Riddle's Mill on the way home from Talladega. Maw has packed quilts, a skillet, a coffeepot, and some food in the wagon for them, and Betsy makes coffee, bakes bread in the skillet, broils meat over the coals, and bakes potatoes in the ashes for supper, and Pap drinks coffee, smokes his pipe, and tells Indian tales around the fire (Letter No. 70). The hotel at Chandler Springs is the site of a political rally that Betsy, George, Buddy, pap, Caladony, and Uncle Hezekiah attend; while waiting for the candidates to arrive, some of the crowd "perused around the spring, and sot under the shelter down thar, and swung in the swing some, and sot on the front entry of the hotel" (Familiar Letters, Letter No. 57).

Little is known about Plowman's life in Talladega with her husband. Two of Albert's brothers married two of Idora's sisters: Thomas married Magnolia in

1872, and George married Laura in 1874. When Albert and Idora finally returned to Talladega from Riddle's Mill, they rented a house near the Plowman home, where Magnolia and Laura and their husbands were living. The couple had no children, and family members called Idora "Aunt Missie" (McLane 24).

Albert Plowman died on October 17, 1878,[5] having been accidentally shot by his good friend Frank Bowden, possibly during a card game in Bowden's office (McCain 23). Idora Plowman apparently did not blame Bowden; she gave him a favorable cameo appearance in one of her sketches four years later (Familiar Letters, Letter No. 57). Albert Plowman was forty years old and had made little money when he died. He left his widow with little property and no money. She depended on her husband's family and her own for support and spent the first two years after his death with her younger sister Laura Plowman in Dallas, Texas. She then returned to the Plowman home in Talladega and operated for a few months the saw mill her husband had left her.

Upper class women who needed to work for money were at a disadvantage even after the Civil War. Teaching and writing were almost the only respectable occupations for them although some were successful at ventures that grew out of "some occupation they had learned in the home" (Boatwright 99). Ever resourceful, Plowman turned her hand to various means of earning a little money. She taught music and made hair braids (McCain 23). She recorded deeds in her father-in-law's probate judge office and copied appeal briefs for her lawyer brother because she "wrote a very plain hand and [. . .] we had no type writers then" ("Betsy Hamilton," ms. 8).

---

[5] Bobbie Jones McLane incorrectly lists Albert Plowman's death as 1868.

Plowman was creative as well as handy with needlework of all kinds; she sold embroidery designs she had created and was "paid for some plain sewing done in an emergency" ("Betsy Hamilton," ms. 8). She also taught a type of bobbin lacemaking called Princess Honiton. Bobbin lacemaking—a form of weaving fine threads tied to wooden or bone bobbins according to a pattern fastened to a hard pillow, pricked out on paper, and marked with brass pins—became a fashionable hobby in Europe and the United States, and lessons were a popular pastime for women. Already familiar with weaving from her childhood days, Plowman learned the intricacies of this new skill quickly. She charged for the lessons, made a percentage on the sale of lace-making materials she had purchased from New York, and sold some of the lace she made herself. The enterprise brought in some four hundred dollars before the fad spent itself.

She learned from a friend in Arkansas how to make rag dolls, sold the dolls she made, and in 1898 wrote an article on dolls that netted her twenty-five dollars. Over the years, she made and sold "rugs, sofa pillows, bedspreads, knitted socks and hoods for babies, shawls, stockings & gloves for grown people and many kinds of fancy work, including tatting and drawn work" ("Betsy Hamilton," ms. 11-12). Her advice later to her stepchildren from her second marriage was to "[d]o things at the right time if you would succeed [. . .]. Take advantage of the psychological moment. Try not to let a good opportunity pass" ("Betsy Hamilton," ms. 9-10).

General McClellan died intestate in 1881, Idlewild was sold, and Plowman had to support herself to an even greater degree. She had begun publishing stories

in the Sunny South, an Atlanta weekly, and in 1882, she took a job teaching at the school in Blue Eye, near Lincoln, where her brother Alden had a medical practice. She boarded during the week with the school principal, J. C. Wetson, and with different students on the weekends. One of her former students, Graves Embry, said the students were "always anxious and delighted" to host their teacher and they thought her "long auburn hair" resembled "molasses candy" (McCain 24).

Plowman turned to writing full time when she left Blue Eye. She wrote most of her sketches while living in the Plowman home in Talladega, many of them "upstairs in the front room on the right," with a cedar tree outside the window that had been planted soon after she had married Albert. The room contained a small desk; an easy chair; and a large painting of her father, Captain John Taylor Rather, Colonel T. M. McElderry, and Governor Reuben F. Chapman (Garner 2).

Plowman traveled extensively, performing her sketches for audiences throughout the South and elsewhere. In 1891, she gave a performance in Auburn, Alabama, to benefit the town's school and met Martin Van Buren Moore, who introduced her in the program. He was a fifty-four-year-old post office inspector who had traveled widely in the United States and abroad. His wife, Sallie, had died, and he relocated in 1888 to Auburn from Lenoir, North Carolina, where he had maintained his family home while he traveled. He had bought the Edwin Reese home, then a mile outside Auburn, a plantation house large enough to suit his family. Like Plowman's father, Moore was born and raised in Tennessee. He had served in the 1st North Carolina Cavalry Regiment and took his amnesty oath

in Camden, South Carolina, after the Civil War ended. He was a writer of poetry and nonfiction on a wide variety of topics, from agriculture to history and travel. In 1891 he was appointed editor of the agricultural department of the Atlanta Constitution, and he contributed regularly to national periodicals (McCain 46). He published a book, The Rhyme of the Southern Rivers, and he made significant contributions to Recollections of a Gray Jacket.

The Atlanta Constitution announced the marriage of "two prominent people" after Plowman and Moore were married at 3:30 in the afternoon on March 15, 1892, in the Atlanta home of Plowman's sister-in-law, Mrs. D. McClellan, with a small gathering of friends and family ("Social Notes"). Moore had seven sons and four daughters, and one of Mrs. Moore's new stepdaughters recalls that "when she [Moore] came to live in our home, where she was step-mother to six young children [the three older boys—George Edgar, Eugene Dick, and John Kennedy—were established in jobs in North Carolina, and the older daughters, Maria Louisa and Mary Emma, were likewise established], ranging in ages from six to sixteen, we thought from the very beginning she was just wonderful." Moore became the "chief entertainer and joy spreader in the family; our friends too thought she was wonderful, and most of them called her mother, as we did" ("Betsy Hamilton," ms. 4). The younger boys were Maurice V., Martin Van Buren, Isaac, and Lauriston Greene; the girls were Margaret and Julia. Moore continued writing and performing, and her husband accompanied her on many of her trips; she would often be gone during the week and return home only on weekends (McCain 47). She enjoyed sitting by the window in her room, and her

essay "My Uncaged Mockingbird," is about the birds she heard from there (McCain 49).

Because of her heavy schedule of performances, Moore was unable to participate in Auburn's social life to the extent of her many invitations. However, she was a member of the Auburn Conversation Club, founded a few years earlier, and often performed for the group when she was able to attend meetings (McCain 53).

M. V. Moore's health declined in the late 1890s, and he died at home the age of sixty-eight on September 1, 1900. He was buried beside his first wife in Lenoir, North Carolina, in his Confederate uniform ("Auburn"), and his widow returned to Talladega and took up residence once again in the Plowman home; "in the Plowman brother's will a room was always to be kept for her throughout her life regardless whether the family lived in the house or it was rented"[6] (McCain 73). From what became her final home, Moore traveled to give the performances that were still in demand, and she continued to write. Some of the short pieces she wrote soon after returning to Talladega reflect a more serious side of her nature (McCain 74). An undated, typed manuscript with penciled changes in Moore's papers at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill is entitled "My Own Log Fire: A Reverie." Her husband's poem "My Old Log Fire," is included in her book. M. V. Moore's poem speaks to memories of his boyhood; his wife's seems to speak to the passing of the people and places of Alabama's backwoods (Moore, I., "My"). The style of "My Own Log Fire" is also reflected in Familiar Letters

[6] Presumably this was Thomas S. Plowman, husband of Idora's sister Magnolia, since George H. and Laura Plowman had been living in Dallas, Texas, for a number of years.

No. 82, with Betsy Hamilton's life pictured in the fire. Since neither of the poems is dated, it is impossible to know which was written first, but because Betsy Hamilton's fireside reverie was published in 1883, it is likely that both poems followed it. Perhaps M. V. Moore was inspired by his wife's article, or perhaps she had already written her poem, and his was in response to it.

Back home after almost ten years' residence in Auburn, Idora Moore was "immediately taken back into the social life of Talladega" and became a member of the Highland City Book Club, where she often performed and where her pieces were often read aloud by other members (McCain 78-79).

Moore spent time traveling both to give performances and for pleasure, visiting her many relatives and friends. She often combined business with pleasure, giving performances during personal visits. In 1909 she visited her sister Martha Willis in Oklahoma and gave performances while there. In 1912, she visited Willis again for several months, this time in South Carolina, and toured the entire state, performing at all the chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution (Willis 20). From October 1913 until January 1914, she and her sister visited New York, "negotiating with 'Harper's' and 'Scribner's,' trying to get her book published," but illness forced her to return home before she could do so (McCain 79).

In 1923 Moore decided to create a perpetual endowment for the Presbyterian orphanage in Talladega. Although she had hoped to present two thousand dollars for the endowment, she was able to raise only a thousand. Her performances for the project took her to Calera, Bay Minette, Letohatchee,

Andalusia, Eufaula, Montgomery, Catherine, Marion Junction, York, Emelle, Aliceville, Carrollton, Reform, Tuscaloosa, Eutaw, Epes, Boligee, Birmingham, Goodwater and Oxford (McCain 85) Her last performance, in July 1928, raised a hundred dollars and completed the thousand dollars with which she funded the endowment (McCain 86), commonly called the Betsy Hamilton Scholarship. The orphans receiving the benefit of the endowment were the inspiration for a poem Moore wrote, "Let the Daisies Tell It" ("Betsy Hamilton, Authoress" 1).

Moore often visited the orphanage, and the children called her Aunt Betsy. She gave a Halloween party there in 1922, celebrating her eighty-first birthday with the orphans. A guest at the party wrote that it fulfilled a dream of Moore's that each little girl at the orphanage have a doll, and she raised money among her friends for that purpose. Johnson Memorial Hall's auditorium was decorated and lit for Halloween, and there Moore presented thirteen girls "of the doll age" with a "Mamma Doll" (McCain 87).

Moore made a handwritten will on October 29, 1927 ("Last Will"). She named her niece Olive Plowman Labatt as executor and left her the bulk of her small estate. She directed that a one-hundred-dollar bond be purchased to fund care of her and her father's cemetery plots, and she left one-hundred-dollar bequests to two nieces (Daisy Plowman and Nannie McClellan Wilkinson) and one stepdaughter (Mamie Moore Willis) and jewelry to three nieces (Nannie, Daisy, and Sadie McClellan Jones) and a stepdaughter (Lula Moore Riggs). Finally, she left her writing desk to Mamie and her Betsy Hamilton papers and the copyright to her work to her stepdaughter Julia Moore Smith.

In January 1929, Moore fell ill with a cold. Previous bouts of pneumonia had weakened her, and she never recovered. She died in the Plowman home, then the property of her nephew Thomas S. Plowman, at one o'clock in the morning on February 25, 1929. She was buried the next day in Talladega's Oak Hill Cemetery next to her first husband, Albert Plowman, after funeral services at the First Presbyterian Church in Talladega.

At the time of her death, an obituary reported, she was the "idol and chief ornament" of Talladega and "the most influential figure in the life of the community" ("Betsy Hamilton, Authoress" 10). Her friends and family often described her as cheerful and bright regardless of her circumstances. She kept a poem clipped from a magazine in her notebook that may well have reflected and inspired her disposition, called "Never Say Die." The poem exhorts the reader to "Keep moving! Keep cheerful!" and "Pluck up your spirits and never say die!" (McCain 80).

Moore also advised that "the secret of doing things is to be interested in what ever you do. I have always tried to enjoy whatever I undertook, otherwise I could not have accomplished so much. I believe I have enjoyed more money to the labor expended by reading from my dialect sketches than from any one thing and perhaps enjoyed it more as it meant much besides the money value. It brought me in touch with thousands of people, and had a tendency to enlarge and soften my heart. It has broadened my views and given untold pleasures which money could not buy. Also published a book" ("Betsy Hamilton" 12-13).

"AUNT BETSY"

Moore was better known by her pen name, Betsy Hamilton, than by her own. Friends and strangers alike called her "Betsy," "Aunt Betsy," and "Mrs. Hamilton" when they spoke and wrote to her. The Atlanta Constitution recognized that phenomenon regarding two of its most popular writers:

> "Betsy Hamilton" is as much a southern character as Bill Arp [pseudonym of Charles H. Smith], and Mrs. Moore, like Mr. Smith, is better known by her sobriquet than by her own name. The other day [. . .] he stopped in Savannah and registered as Charles H. Smith and passed through the community unknown. Had he registered as "Bill Arp" he would have been besieged. Though "Betsy Hamilton" known [sic] far and wide, it is probable that Mrs. Moore would have the same experience. These celebrities will have to change their names to Betsy Hamilton Moore and Bill Arp Smith. ("Known")

Moore had been a clever and resourceful child, with an active imagination and well-developed powers of storytelling and imitation. She was used to recognizing—and seizing—opportunities to make a little money or develop a new interest. Writing became another such opportunity for her. Albert Plowman had encouraged his wife's literary activities, and when she remarried, her new husband, Martin Van Buren Moore, himself a prodigious writer, also encouraged her to continue her successful writing career; in fact, she "never took part in any

of the domestic activities in the Moore household, but continued her writing" ("Betsy Hamilton," ms. 4).

As a child, schoolgirl, and woman, Moore observed the life around her closely and formed stories about what she saw. She worked the characters and small events of life into her stories, focusing particularly on the country people, or "crackers," she met at a local market town and on the Negroes she knew from her father's and friends' plantations, both before and after the Civil War. Her stories are character sketches of these two groups of people, with the weak story lines merely providing vehicles for the characters to reveal themselves in speech, manner, dress, and behavior. "Nearly every piece she wrote" had as characters people "she knew and often she would use their real names" (McCain 56).

Plowman's career as a published author began in 1873 when "Betsy's First Trip to Town" was published in Talladega County's newspaper, The Alabama Reporter. Albert Plowman had "suggested [. . .] that it be put in the County paper [. . .] and signed 'Betsy Hamilton'," and he "bound the editor over to secrecy [. . . about] who the author was." The story was very well received and was widely copied in other publications including the New York Sun and "patent outsides" (Moore, I., Southern Character Sketches 9). Copying material from other newspapers was a common practice at the time since copyright laws—which protected women unevenly depending on state property laws where they lived—were typically unenforced, and newspaper editors generally did not secure copyright protection for material they published (Homestead 152). Plowman's sketches first show a copyright statement in November 1884.

Numerous accounts of the origin of Plowman's first publishing success say that Plowman's younger brother Walter submitted the story secretly to the paper on his sister's behalf; it was printed anonymously, and only afterward was the author's identity made known to the editor, who was then sworn to secrecy (Willis 19). However, since the version naming Albert Plowman as the catalyst for publication is the one put forward in the author's preface to her own book, it is likely the correct one, or at least the one she wanted promulgated.

Plowman may have published occasional stories in weekly magazines or newspapers in the 1870s, but needing to support herself following the deaths of her husband and her father, she sought regular publication and began publishing in the Sunny South, a weekly news and literary paper in Atlanta, in 1881.

The character Betsy Hamilton is entirely fictitious; Idora McClellan took her name from an anecdote told by a friend, Mary Glass, at school. McClellan "took up the story, embellished it, and told it so well that the girls began calling her 'Betsy,' then 'Betsy Hamilton' became her play name in all the make-believe games and frolics at school—and afterwards clung to her as a 'nick-name'" (Moore, I., Southern Character Sketches 10). She adopted the name as her pseudonym as well, and the author became inseparable from her character in the eyes of many of her fans.

Despite the rise of the short story as a literary form, Idora McClellan Plowman Moore seldom wrote beyond the character sketch format. Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature defines the sketch as "a short literary composition somewhat resembling the short story and the essay but intentionally

slight in treatment, discursive in style, and familiar in tone" ("Sketch"). Development of the sketch is "linked" to the rise of regionalism (local color) in the nineteenth century (Pryse 35). It was also a staple of old Southwest humor; although longer stories were published, many were simply sketches of only a few paragraphs. Plowman's Familiar Letter sketches, though, reveal a backwoods community and the daily lives of its inhabitants in great detail. The dialect is reportedly accurate, as are the details of the people and places. A Tuskegee woman wrote in 1890 that her "old grandmother enjoyed Betsy Hamilton's sketches, and as I read them to her she would say, 'that is exactly so. I have seen people just like that'" (Howard).

The Sunny South

Plowman first published on a regular basis in the Sunny South, an illustrated literary weekly newspaper whose publication by John H. Seals and Mary E. Bryan in Atlanta began in October 1874. In 1875, an Atlanta Constitution writer (possibly Joel Chandler Harris since he did much of this kind of writing on the paper) reported that the Sunny South published stories "in which every class and nature finds [sic] some congenial idea to delight and interest it" and claimed that the weekly was read "in the parlors of the upper tendom [the most elite households of the city], in the kitchen, in the lowly cottage, in the tenement house, the stable and the workshop" ("Literary"). The front-page banner advertised the paper as being "devoted to literature, news, education, romance, agriculture,

manufacturing, and general development of the south," and Saturday was publication day so subscribers had the entire weekend to enjoy it (Sunny South).

Seals and Bryan worked to increase circulation, providing material for everyone in the household but concentrating on their most numerous readers, women. By the end of the 1870s, circulation had stabilized around ten thousand, but in the first half of the 1880s, they managed to explode it to a hundred thousand (Bussel 1). By the time Seals retired and sold the paper in 1892, it was read nationwide, and in "many thousands of homes in the South and West" ("Editor"). Littleton H. Moore, who studied the Sunny South, finds most of the fiction "sentimental, didactic, and provincial" (cited in Bussel 10). However, Betsy Hamilton's breezy letters—even the ones that treat serious topics such as death—while provincial in the sense of being southern, are anything but sentimental or didactic. On October 28, 1882, an editorial-style article appeared in the Sunny South, signed by "J. H." (possibly Joel Chandler Harris, who was familiar with Plowman's writing and would be instrumental in moving her to the Atlanta Constitution a little more than a year later). The article's author praises the Backwoods Letters and ascribes the "realism" of Betsy Hamilton's letters to her being "as close a student of people and their peculiarities as was ever Charles Dickens"; he suggests that their value is not just in their humor but in their "absolute accuracy" as records of a passing way of life (J. H.)

Plowman's first series of Betsy Hamilton sketches is the Familiar Letters, a numbered series of 110 published in the Sunny South from May 14, 1881, to January 26, 1884. The column is titled "The Backwoods. Familiar Letters," and

each letter has a title and a number. The titles range from those that are merely descriptive of the contents—"Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny, About Her Trip to Town" (Letter No. 2)—to those that intrigue readers with the nature of the contents—"Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny, Showing How Reports are Circulated" (Letter No. 1)—to those that are out-and-out funny—"A Visit from George Washington Higgins.—'And We are Besot on all Sides'" (Letter No. 8). Some of the more memorable titles involve Betsy's father and George Washington Higgins: "Pap's Sick and Maw's Mad" (Letter No. 21), "Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny 'Pap' Gits Drunk in Atlanty, and We Git Benighted Gwine Home" (Letter No. 32), "The Babies Are All (The) Cry—George is Routed and Put to Flight" (Letter No. 97), and "Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. Everything and Everybody Misses George" (Letters No. 108 and 109).

Her second series, which ran from about February 9, 1884, to at least January 17, 1885, is also headed "The Backwoods. Familiar Letters," but these are letters from Saleny Sidebottom to Betsy. The first eight are unnumbered; the rest of the series is numbered, beginning with No. 8 (misnumbering of the Familiar Letters was common; some letters have duplicate numbers, some are missing numbers altogether, and some have transposed digits). None of the letters in this series has a descriptive subtitle; all are titled simply "Saleny Sidebottom to Betsy Hamilton. Shoulderbone Settlement, Blue Jeens Deestrict, North Georgy." The Saleny-to-Betsy letters, published concurrently with Plowman's column in the Atlanta Constitution, ran weekly into April 1884 and then appeared more

sporadically. The last letter found in the University of Georgia's archives, possibly the most complete run available, is No. 21, dated January 17, 1885.[7]

Plowman received five dollars for each of her sketches, and for about three years, she contributed a weekly Familiar Letter, missives from Betsy Hamilton to her cousin Saleny Sidebottom and, less frequently, to her sister Flurridy Tennysy. Over the course of the series, characters are introduced and story lines develop and are resolved. Romance is the thread that ties the series together: Gossip about romance is the topic of the first letter, and romance, courting, and love among the residents of the Hillabee community figure heavily in most of the letters.

In July and August 1881, Plowman also contributed occasional Ebony Crayon sketches, stories featuring black characters developed from her experiences on her father's plantation and in Talladega during Reconstruction. According to her stepdaughter Julia Moore Smith, "the incidents which she relates are all mainly true, and the characters real" (Smith). In 1895, the Sunny South published six Betsy Hamilton stories between May and October, some of which were Ebony Crayon sketches. In July 1895, Moore published "A Georgia Wedding" in Werner's Magazine. No other sketch of that title seems to have been published, although on December 2, 1894, "An Alabama Backwoods Wedding:

---

[7] Kathryn McKee Burgess suggests that Plowman may not have written the Saleny-to-Betsy letters since they "resemble Betsy's in tone but lack the wit characterizing Betsy's correspondence" and since she did not clip those letters from the newspaper as she had done for the first ninety-two letters in the Familiar Letters series (a file of clipped articles, apparently for a scrapbook) is in the Idora McClellan Moore papers at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill). However, given the change in writing style from the Sunny South's Familiar Letters to the Atlanta Constitution's Backwoods Sketches, the change from Betsy's letters to Saleny's letters is not sufficient to indicate another author. Likewise, the fact that Saleny's letters are not in the scrapbook file is not necessarily indicative of another author since not all of Betsy's 110 letters are in the file. However, the fact that only the Saleny-to-Betsy letters are illustrated could be significant.

An Interesting Chapter of Cracker Life Which Will Be Appreciated by Our Readers" had appeared in the Atlanta Constitution under the heading "An Old Favorite Returns After a Long Absence." Since Alabama and Georgia cracker weddings would not have had many differences, it is likely the story published in Werner's is the earlier one retitled and perhaps reworked. Moore reworked, sometimes retitled, and republished a number of her sketches over the years.

Harper's Weekly

S. S. Conant, editor of Harper's Weekly, solicited some Betsy Hamilton letters from Plowman in January 1883, offering ten dollars for each of her sketches (cited in McCain 145). In January and February 1884, two sketches appeared, "The Big Meetin' at Swingin' Limb" and "The Quiltin' at Old Mrs. Robertson's." Both were illustrated by W. L. Sheppard, a noted illustrator from Richmond, Virginia. Despite assurances in June 1883 that Harper and Brothers might be interested in publishing a collection of her sketches (cited in McCain 145), Plowman never established herself as a regular contributor to Harper's, and she was unable to get a collection published anywhere before 1921.

The Atlanta Constitution

In the January 20, 1884, issue of the Atlanta Constitution, Joel Chandler Harris praised Betsy Hamilton's story in a recent issue of Harper's Weekly, saying that "'Betsey [sic] Hamilton' has come to stay" (Harris 2). Her brand of country and plantation humor was popular with readers. Joel Chandler Harris,

then also early in his writing career, was impressed with the fidelity of her character sketches and humor. He convinced Henry Grady, editor of the Atlanta Constitution, to publish Plowman's stories on a regular basis. William Eppes, a Talladega historian who has done "extensive research" on Idora McClellan Plowman Moore, claims that William Dean Howells, editor of Harper's Weekly, was an "enthusiastic champion" of her work and that it was "though his efforts" that Grady took Plowman onto the staff of the Atlanta Constitution (13). The move from the Sunny South to the Constitution established her as a major figure, along with Harris and Bill Arp, among Southern humorists and experts in writing dialect stories. The fact that the Constitution took Plowman on when they did argues for her sketches having been instrumental rather than coincidental in the Sunny South's tremendous growth during the early 1880s.

Plowman first published in the Constitution on February 3, 1884, and was paid twenty-five dollars an article. She usually published one sketch a week, on Sundays, but occasionally contributed two or three per week. Louise Burke McCain suggests that Plowman "began visiting the Clay County Hillabees, staying sometimes for weeks with them" as a "continual source of material" (25).

The Betsy Hamilton sketches often appeared alongside Joel Chandler Harris's Uncle Remus stories and Bill Arp's crackerbox philosopher columns. In February and March 1884 issues of the newspaper, the page containing those three writers' columns was headed "Our Dixie Humorists." Fiction generally appeared on pages two through four of the Constitution during the early 1880s, and Plowman's sketches occasionally appeared on page one.

Both Plowman and her sketches enjoyed enormous popularity. In March 1885, a new engine for the Talladega and Coosa Valley railroad was named the "Betsy Hamilton" in honor of Plowman ("The 'Betsy'"). Also in 1885, Betsy Hamilton tobacco was widely advertised as giving "universal satisfaction" and being "for sale everywhere" ("Classified Ad 2"). Betsy Hamilton still enjoyed name recognition sufficient to support advertising even in 1894; with or without Idora McClellan Plowman Moore's permission, the publisher of the Annie Dennis Cook Book used Betsy Hamilton to promote the book, claiming that "Betsy Hamilton says the girls at home are delighted with it" ("Classified Ad 8").

The Atlanta Constitution columns fall into several series or groups: seven Betsy Hamilton's Letters in February and March 1884; thirteen sketches under the heading of "Dialect of Fifty Years Ago Retold" from March through June 1884; thirty-one "Sketch[es] of Life in the Backwoods" from June 1884 to October 1884; serialized story, "A Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor," between October 1884 and February 1885; sixty individually titled sketches (a few of which are plantation, not backwoods, stories) from March 1885 to September 1899; and twenty-two "Betsy Hamilton's Southern Character Sketches" from November 1915 to May 1916. The titles of the individual sketches are typically descriptive in nature. Titles of the "Betsy Hamilton Letters" all refer to a particular activity described in each sketch, such as "Aunt Mahaly's Candy Pullin'" (3 Feb. 1884) and "Camping Out" (16 Mar. 1884). Titles in the "Dialect of Fifty Years Ago Retold" series typically include references to one or more topics covered in each sketch: "How Betsy and the

Galls [sic] Went to Town and Ate Ginger Cakes on the Doorstop—Going Around to the Stores to See the Sights—The Getting Out of Town, Etc." (23 Mar. 1884) and "Tom Davis Tells Betsy She Looked Pretty and Sweet; Betsy 'Sot an' Listened;' He Then Asked Her How She Would Like to be Mrs. Davis; To This Betsy Said, 'No!' Etc. Etc." (4 May 1884). Titles for the "Sketch of Life in the Backwoods" series are similar. Titles of the sketches that do not fall into a series are varied; most are descriptive, and a few play with words: "Betsy's Boy Beau. Merry Maidens Making Mashes Muscadining. [. . .] Many Matches Made" (10 Oct. 1885) and "Bad, Black 'Babe.' Begins Business by Burning Betsy's Best Basque. Besides Burning Betsy's Best Basque, Babe Burns Betsy's Biscuit—Besides Burning Betsy's Biscuit, Babe Borrows Betsy's Breastpin—Babe Bounced Before Breakfast" (7 Nov. 1886). Titles in "Betsy Hamilton's Southern Character Sketches" are short and name the character, place, or event that is the basis of the story: "Borrowing Neighbors" (21 Nov. 1915), "Hog Killing in Hillabee" (5 Dec. 1915), and "The Cross Roads Store" (5 Mar. 1916).

Rather than completely abandoning the letter format of the Sunny South's Familiar Letters, Plowman used an unnamed narrator writing from Lazy Farm, Alabama., to introduce "our cousin 'Betsy Hamilton'" and her letters with the information that they "are read aloud around the fire these long winter nights" (3 Feb. 1884) or "in the rustic summer house" (13 Apr. 1884) or are acted out in "a dialogue taken from one of Cousin Betsy's letters" (30 Mar. 1884). However, this introductory device disappears in July 1884, and later backwoods sketches have no introduction or epistolary salutation of any kind although most are written in

the first person. All except the 1915-1916 Southern Character Sketches are "signed" at the bottom of the column by Betsy Hamilton,[8] and all the "darky" sketches in that series employ a narrator.

The Betsy Hamilton sketches were an almost weekly staple up to late March 1885. For the remainder of that year, only eleven sketches appeared in the Constitution. Twelve appeared in 1886, ten in 1887, none in 1888, and only seven between 1889 and 1894.

Between February and December 1895, Idora Moore made a comeback in the Atlanta Constitution with twelve sketches published on a more or less monthly basis. From 1886 to 1899, only six sketches appeared in the Constitution, and in 1915, she made another comeback, a more heavily advertised undertaking this time. Twenty-three "Betsy Hamilton's Southern Character Sketches" ran from November 1915 to May 1916. The sketches appeared in two groupings, "The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South" and "The Old-Time Plantation Negroes," and many were illustrated. Although the Constitution implied that Moore was writing new material, claiming that she was "under contract to write exclusively for the Constitution," most of the sketches that appeared in 1915 and 1916 had been published earlier ("Other"). However, these highly sentimental word pictures bear little real resemblance to their originals, whose fresh narrative voice and immediacy of time and place have been replaced by a distant and formal narrator recalling days that long gone.

---

[8] In the 1880s and 1890s, authors' name frequently appeared at the bottom of their articles, placed in such a way that they looked similar to typed signatures. This practice aided the conceit of the Betsy Hamilton letters, even after Plowman no longer used the epistolary format in her sketches.

With few exceptions, Moore wrote as and about Betsy Hamilton. In 1895, she contributed a different kind of article to the Atlanta Constitution, a discussion of the merits of a novel about black characters; she did not consider the prospect a likely one and signed the article as Betsy Hamilton ("Question"). In 1896, she introduced an article in the Constitution that reproduced some of the pages of an Atlanta pioneer, Dr. William N. White, saying "I have read the manuscript with the utmost interest and delight [. . .] and signing her introduction as Idora M. Moore (Betsy Hamilton) ("The Diary"). She published her article on dolls in 1898 as Idora M. Moore (Betsy Hamilton).

In 1899 she published a reflective piece in the Constitution titled "Betsy Hamilton. Studies in a Waiting-Room—the Little Bundle in a Crocheted Shawl" and signed it Idora M. Moore. The article describes the people in a crowded train station, probably Atlanta, waiting for a train that is two hours late: the "patient, slavish" mother and her six small children; the well-dressed, high-strung young man who mutters "hints of blasphemy or disgust" at the unexpected delay; the "impatient, fidgety schoolgirl" who "stamps her feet, chews her gum faster, talks louder" in her "indignation"; three "silently weeping women" to whom the delayed train may mean "much disappointment to "bereaved heart[s]"; an "unmistakable, blushing newly-married couple" around whom is "the glorious light of the morning of life"; an "earnest business traveler" for whom "each moment seems an eternity, and each moment increases [. . .] impatience." Finally, Moore describes her encounter with a "plainly but neatly dressed" woman of about thirty-five who holds an infant wrapped in a shawl, her month-old sick

granddaughter whose "worthless, dissipated but handsome" father and fourteen-year-old mother had died (Moore, I., "Betsy"). In these word pictures, readers see something of the fine detail Moore used to bring life to the characters in Hillabee. By including "Betsy Hamilton" in the article's title, the author was assured of name recognition, even in 1899, that Idora M. Moore could not have hoped for. In 1902, the Constitution published an article by Idora M. Moore (Betsy Hamilton) proposing cotton factories for southern towns with a population of at least three thousand people and describing Talladega's successful venture (Moore, I., "Plan").

Being Betsy Hamilton—Delineating Characters on the Stage

Idora McClellan Plowman Moore was no stranger to the stage. Like all students of the day, she had given recitations in school, and she was "one of the chief participants in these student recitations" (McCain 11). When she returned to Idlewild in 1864, she took part in a play, The Cameron Pride, put on near Talladega for the benefit of Confederate soldiers. The show was "a great success due especially to Idora's dramatic talent," and she then participated in "all the small gatherings for the benefit of the soldiers" (McCain 13-14). At the end of her year teaching in Blue Eye, 1883, she performed one of her sketches, "Old Miss Freshours," for the entire community (McCain 24).

She was, by all accounts, a gifted performer, and her readings—called recitations, delineations, performances, and entertainments—were popular with audiences. A New Orleans Times-Democrat review claims that "'Betsy Hamilton

does not assume the role of lecturer; she is merely the dramatic interpreter of her own writing, the impersonator of her own literary creations'" and that "'many eminent critics have said her rendition of the Negro dialect is unequaled by any other woman in literature. In this her work is not only faultless and pure but is without either exaggeration of effort'" (qtd. in Dalyrmple).

Her first performance publicized by the Atlanta Constitution was in November 1882 at an entertainment given by Mary E. Bryan in the Atlanta home of Mr. C. Fairbanks. Violin and organ music, recitations of poetry, a humorous address, and Plowman's performance of "Miss Freshours" and a "Hardshell sermon in a manner which showed her to be an elocutionist of no ordinary power" comprised the program ("Betsy Hamilton: Pleasant"). Between 1883 and 1903, the Constitution reported on or advertised numerous Betsy Hamilton performances, not only in Atlanta but in towns throughout the South and as far away as Texas, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and New York. She also performed often for students while she lived in Auburn (Garner 3).

By 1886, Plowman's sketches in print were trailing off, and her performances were becoming more frequent and more distant from home. In 1887, Henry Grady included her on the list of performers at the Eatonton, Georgia, chautauqua. This was reportedly the first time she "dreamed of making money by reciting her pieces," and despite her previous experience, she was not confident of her abilities. Her chautauqua performances, however, were "a tremendous success" and her performing career was well and truly established

(McCain 33-34). She traveled all over the South, often performing at benefits for aid and civic societies, schools, and churches.

In August 1889, Henry Grady had asked Richard Watson Gilder of the Century to help Plowman, "'a particular friend of mine and of Mr. Harris'. [. . .] to one or two dialect readings in New York'" (qtd. in McCain 144). She ultimately performed at the New York Chautauqua in the 1904 and 1905 seasons. Those appearances broadened her exposure and reputation even further and "brought to her many invitations from over the country," and she was "in constant demand" (Dalrymple). A 1915 advertisement announcing "the Sunday Constitution's Great New Feature 'Betsy Hamilton'" (her comeback series of Southern Character Sketches that ran for several months in 1915 and 1916) claims that Moore had become "so famous she gave up writing for The Constitution and magazines of national fame to give readings at chautauquas and on lyceum circuits" ("Other 4").

In 1893, the Alabama Chatauqua Association had been formed, and the meetings were held in Shelby Springs for two years; the assembly was then moved to Talladega, and meetings were held for the next fifteen years in an auditorium built for that purpose (Vandiver, II 243-44). It is difficult to believe that Idora Moore would not have been on those programs given her fame, her prominence in Talladega, and her experience with the Georgia and New York chautauquas. She almost always served as her own agent, booking her performances herself. The one exception to that practice was in 1896, when she

went on the lyceum circuit with the Southern Lyceum Bureau in Nashville, Tennessee, and considered herself to have "sold out" by doing so (McCain 41).

Bill Arp describes an 1888 performance:

> She is the perfection of an actor in her line. [. . .] expecting nothing more than the usual reading and recitation from her own writings, [. . .] we were all impressed at the mixture of acting with reading, and the clever manner by which she makes the transition from one to the other. [. . .] How natural was her old time dress. The old drawstring frock and checked apron and sunbonnet. How natural was her country talk as she soliloquized about those triflin' aggregative Simmons boys that were trampin' around her premises and doin' of their devilment; but she never stopped carding as she talked, and she knew how to card and make the cotton rolls, and how to spin them into thread, and there was good music in that old wheel—[. . .] I believe she has got a 'misery' in her side sure enough, or she could not have acted it so well. [. . .] Aunt Betsy can weave too. [. . .] she talked so knowingly about the warp and the fillin' and the cuts and the spun truck and what she was gwine to dye with. (Arp)

The Eppes family acquired the old-fashioned spinning wheel used in these performances; it was kept as an heirloom in the Eppes-McCord house in

Goodwater, Alabama, but disappeared sometime before 1982 when it was loaned to a theater group (Eppes 12). Moore sang the following "plantation quilting song" during demonstrations, and "her body kept time in unison":

> Needle and thimbles, an' scissors an' thread,
>
> We is quiltin' dis quilt for my mammy's bed,
>
> Han' me dat thred, sis' Calline Curry,
>
> Quilt dem shells, gals, and be in a hurry.
>
> Gimme dat wax over dar, sis' Mandy,
>
> You settin' round dar powerful handy. (Garner 3)

More lines of this song appear in Christmas on an Old Time Plantation:

> Gimme nudder needle, I done broke mine
>
> Dat'n you gimme was mos' too fine.
>
> Hurry up, gals, de chickens is crowin'
>
> Mos' midnight an' hit still er snowin'
>
> Dis quilt mos done, we're on de las' shell,
>
> Gittin' bout time to ring de supper bell. (Moore, I., Christmas 17)

For more than forty years, Moore performed across the South and in the Midwest and North. She also gave impromptu performances; Emily McBride recalls an evening near the sun dial at Alabama College (now University of Montevallo) during an Alabama Writers' Conclave meeting:

> "I heard what sounded very much like a darky catching a
>
> chicken. On drawing nearer I saw it was the inimitable
>
> author of dialect stories herself giving his [sic] recitation,

> and doing it so realistically that every one [sic] was assisting her in capturing the elusive chicken, including the dignified Marie Bankhead Owen, Dr. Frank Willie Barnett, Maud Lindsay and many others." (qtd. in Dalrymple)

As Moore traveled, she made friends among her audiences, and friends and fans alike wrote to "Betsy" and "Aunt Betsy." Her July 1928 performance for the young people's Christian group at Shocco Springs was her last. She was eighty-five.

The Books

Moore tried to get a collection of her sketches published in the winter of 1913-14, but she fell ill and had to leave New York before she could convince a publisher to take on her work. She had taken out a copyright on her work in March 1884 (Library). Paul Hamilton Hayne, the noted poet, offered to write a letter of personal introduction for her to a reader at Appleton, who may have already rejected her manuscript, possibly on the basis of its length. Plowman was planning a trip to New York to meet with the publisher and provide a recitation of some of her stories for Mr. Bunce, the publisher's reader, "to prove to publishers, & readers, that Betsy has a right to be known" (Hayne). She either never made the trip or, if she did, was unsuccessful in her efforts. By the time her Southern Character Sketches was published, both she and the local color genre were past history.

Given Moore's association with Mary E. Bryan during their years together at the Sunny South, it is curious that Bryan apparently did not assist Moore in getting her book published. Appleton was one of Bryan's publishers, and Bryan was well known in New York publishing circles. In fact, she was one of the country's highest earning women who wrote for a living. In 1885, she moved to New York to edit magazines for publisher George Munro, and she published some forty-seven novels beginning in 1880. Despite her own success—due in part to patronage by John Seals and George Munro—and her contacts in publishing, she was either unable or unwilling to help Moore bring out her book.

In 1921, Moore was finally able to arrange a deal with the Dickert Company in Atlanta to self-publish her book; for nine hundred dollars (five hundred dollars' worth of Liberty bonds and a ninety-day note for the remaining four hundred dollars), Dickert printed a thousand copies of the book, including a "'special printed wrapper for each book and boards and wrapping paper for mailing at least 500 copies individually'" (qtd. in McCain 81). Moore managed the sale of her books herself, as she had managed her performing career. They were priced at two dollars, and booksellers made fifty cents on each copy. The books sold well, but with a print run of only a thousand and no reprints, neither the booksellers nor the author could make much money, even assuming they all sold. In fact, Moore presented many copies as gifts to friends and family, usually signed with both her name and her pen name and usually with a short poem she had composed on October 5, 1921, written on the flyleaf:

"As this little book is a gift from your friend

Please allow me also a good wish to send

May the sunshine of love illumine your way

And joy and contentment be yours every day." (qtd. in McCain 83)

A September 25, 1921, review in the Atlanta Constitution of Betsy Hamilton: Southern Character Sketches includes an introduction, "Who Is Betsy Hamilton?" By the time Moore published her only collection, she had been out of print in the newspapers for almost twenty-five years, except for a brief rerun of some of her sketches five years earlier, although she had been performing during the interim. The stories in her book had been printed in the Sunny South, Harper's Weekly, and the Atlanta Constitution, and the review refers to them as "among the most popular original sketches then contributed by the popular writers of the day" and suggests that the "contents of this book is [sic] better known to southern readers than any other, for these character sketches [. . .] were among the most popular selections for recitations among the pupils of the schools from that of the little crossroads town to the southern college" ("Book"). The book is dedicated to Henry W. Grady, her "valued friend of former days" and to her stepdaughter Julia Moore Smith (Moore, I. Southern Character Sketches 7).

Moore had observed the hill country people of the district around Chandler Springs as a child and at Riddle's Mill. To her, they represented "that innocent hearted class of God's pure, honest, unsophisticated country folk whose quiet lives never led them beyond the confines of their own little settlement, therefore a trip to town was to them an event to be appreciated almost like a

glimpse into another world." The preface to her book expresses a desire that her sketches "be preserved as history of a unique type of people found only in the remote sections of the South; and who are now fast passing away" (Moore, I. Southern Character Sketches 9-10).

Southern Character Sketches is in three parts: stories from the backwoods sketches make up Part I, "darky" sketches make up Part II, and between them is a Digression consisting of two poems by Martin Van Buren Moore and two stanzas from his Rhyme of Southern Rivers (entitled in the book "The Rivers of Georgia" and "The Rivers of Alabama") and three pieces by Idora McClellan Moore.

In 1937, Moore's stepdaughter Julia Moore Smith published a revised edition of Southern Character Sketches with only half the number of sketches in the original edition, including four new pieces. None of the "Digressions" from the first edition are in the revised edition, which is divided into two parts, corresponding roughly to a division of backwoods and "darky" sketches.

A charter member of the Alabama Writers' Conclave, Moore had presented a signed copy of her book and given a reading at the Conclave's first meeting at Alabama College in 1923. The conference closed with an "old-fashioned dance" after the Press Banquet, and Moore, then seventy-two and "gowned in white swiss, with fishu crossed over the breast, and fastened with a cameo brooch, a piece from the antique set given her by Captain Moore," led the Virginia reel (Dalrymple). On June 15, 1932, the Conclave honored her with a bronze memorial plaque, plaque, and the Betsy Hamilton Collection of Alabama Writers presented to the college's library. The plaque and portrait were for the

Betsy Hamilton Room, which was to house a collection of books, music, and plays written about Alabama or by Alabama authors and donated to the Writers Conclave for the collection. The building housing the old library is now offices and classrooms, and the books and other materials have been absorbed into the library's overall holdings, but the plaque has been preserved and is in the library archives.

PART II

HILLABEE: AN ALABAMA BACKWOODS COMMUNITY

"Folks don't die fur the want er company when they git sick in this settlement, but plenty of em has pegged out from having too much."

Betsy Hamilton, Letter No. 35

CHAPTER I

BETSY HAMILTON AND HER GANG IN THE HILLABEE SETTLEMENT

"Dear Saleny:—Hits been a regular coon's age sense I last tuck my pen in han to tell you we was well and wisht you the same blessin."

Betsy Hamilton, Familiar Letters, Letter No. 3

Idora Plowman's Familiar Letters are not the rough, bawdy stories her humorist predecessors wrote, but they cover the same ground from a female perspective. They weave the subject matter of backwoods life into stories that appealed to both men and women of her day although women were her primary audience. Betsy and her gang live life to the fullest in an active community of upstanding citizens, odd characters, scalawag boys, gossiping women, meddling girls, and occasional trouble-makers; in other words, they live in the kind of world many of Moore's readers could identify with or at least wanted to know more about.

Hillabee seemed to them like a real place with real people living in it. It seemed real for two reasons. First, Hillabee was a place name Moore's Alabama readers were familiar with. It is the name of a tribe in the Creek Nation and a tributary of the Talladega River. Hillabee Creek, an Indian settlement on a Creek Indian reservation, was in upper Tallapoosa County, about a mile from Pinkneyville, and the Hillabee Cemetery was near Hackneyville. Hillabee Mill

was a mile from Millerville, and the Hillabee Post Office was five miles from Ashland. Hillabee also names geological formations in the area, and some twenty Baptist churches belonged to the Hillabee Association.

Second, Plowman wrote about what she had seen and heard from the poor white residents of the backwoods settlements—the crackers—as they traveled back and forth from their homes in the hills of Clay, Tallapoosa, and Talladega County to the market town of Talladega in the 1870s and around Chandler Springs during her childhood. She skillfully wove the people and events she saw or heard about into stories that came to life in Betsy Hamilton's frequent and verbose letters to her cousin Saleny and sister Flurridy Tennysy. Finally, Plowman's choice of subject matter; her use of Betsy, a young woman, as her protagonist and narrator; and her attention to accurate detail make her sketches an important resource in the twenty-first century.

The Hillabee of Betsy Hamilton's letters, placed in Talladega County, is a thriving community filled with people who work hard and play when they are not working. Family matters and neighborly concerns make up the bulk of Betsy's correspondence: who is courting whom, who has come to visit or gone visiting, who is in trouble or ill, what happened at church or the school last week, and how a problem between neighbors has been resolved. The details of place and daily life are plentiful, and readers easily build up a mental picture of the settlement and its many inhabitants.

Plowman did not, however, write about the "dark side of humanity," as old Southwest humorists so often did. Life in the backwoods undoubtedly

included the death, evil, and universal human depravity the earlier humorists saw and addressed, but Plowman's sketches focus on the sunnier side of that life (Cohen and Dillingham xxxvii). Scratching out a living was difficult in the backwoods, but the backwoods folk made time for frolics and courtship and had lives as full as those anyone in a town or a big city could have.

THE CENTRAL ALABAMA BACKWOODS

Riddle's Mill and Chandler Springs are in Talladega County but lie only a few miles from Clay County. Many of the backwoods people Plowman met at those two watering places would have lived in settlements located in the less accessible Clay County. Because of its unsuitability for farming, Clay County, created from parts of Talladega and Randolph counties in 1866, was one of the last of the areas to be settled from the land ceded by the Creeks. Much of it lies in what is now Talladega National Forest, and the rough terrain comprising nearly half the county forms the southernmost edge of the Appalachian Mountains; Mount Cheaha, the highest point in Alabama, rises to twenty-four hundred feet. Even plateaus in the area are unsuited for commercial agriculture because of the poor soil. Subsistence farming was the norm: corn, a little cotton, and vegetables, along with livestock to work the land and feed the family.

The 1870 census showed a population in Clay County of about ninety-five hundred people (Grundy 270). Only a few small towns dotted the countryside; the first rail line appeared only in 1906, and there were no navigable rivers. Even in the twenty-first century, Clay County boasts "only two communities deserving the

designation 'towns'," Ashland and Lineville (Flynt, Foreword xiii). Some areas marked on current Alabama maps as towns are nothing more than a collection of houses and churches at a crossroads.

Because of the extreme isolation of communities and the prevalence of subsistence farming, Clay County avoided the Black Belt and other King Cotton counties' experience of dirt poor farmers' living alongside magnificently rich planters. In fact, poor whites and yeoman farmers in Clay County generally were differentiated "only marginally in education, culture, and even prosperity" (Flynt, Poor 12).

Even in Talladega County, isolation and lack of accessibility were only relatively less than in Clay County up to the Civil War. Indian trails were the basis of transportation arteries, widened for horse-drawn wagons and carts. The McIntosh Trail, a main artery, ran some twenty-one miles from Talladega to Sylacauga, then another fifty miles to Wetumpka. Travel just from Sylacauga to Wetumpka could take as long as two weeks because of the trail's poor condition. (Mizzell 12). Stages used the trail from 1835; when the stage route was extended to Rome, Georgia, it passed directly in front of the McClellans' home, Idlewild. Talladega County became slightly less isolated when a plank road[1] was built in the early 1850s, linking Sylacauga with Montgomery; plans to extend the road, which cost between two and four thousand dollars per mile to construct, to

[1] Historian Philip G. Mizzell describes the road: "The planks were split logs placed parallel across the road with the round side up. The logs were 2 x 6 planks and measured about ten feet wide. Needless to say, most customers of the plank road did complain about a very uncomfortable ride." The road was as expensive to maintain as it had been to build, and the company that owned it went bankrupt within a few years, leaving the road to rot in place (13).

Talladega were never realized (Mizzell 12-13). The first rail line through Talladega County was not constructed until 1861.

BETSY HAMILTON'S HILLABEE

Contemporaneous accounts of cracker communities and people were common in popular magazines and newspapers. The region was opening up for leisure travel, and northerners were curious about the region and all its oddities, which were sometimes exaggerated by writers for the sake of salability and also sometimes focused on the poorest element of cracker life. Nevertheless, not all these articles focused on the poor white trash population or exaggerated the way of life of the poor white farmers of the southern backwoods, and many included elements verified by twentieth-century historical research.

David Edwin Ballew's dissertation on hill country communities in the counties of northwest Mississippi and northeast Alabama discusses many of the same elements found in contemporaneous accounts: isolation and the self-sufficiency it required; religion; the hard work required to scratch out a living; and the homely entertainments with which people ameliorated their difficult existence. Plowman's descriptions of Hillabee contain many similarities to contemporaneous accounts and also reflect the elements Ballew found important in hill country life.

The Village of Hillabee

Cracker settlements were active communities. An 1904 article in Outing magazine describes a settlement that included houses, a church, and several small stores whose hours of business were sunrise to dusk with a lunchtime closing (Johnson 522). Betsy's first letter to Saleny begins to build a similar picture of Hillabee: Uncle Hagan's meeting house is a mile from old man Sykes's house and is "in sight of the school house thar at the forks of the road, whar Malindy Foman teaches school." Hillabee's school is a mile from the Brier Patch cross roads, and the Coosa River is near enough that Betsy uses it to make a point, saying it would be easier to make the river run backwards than to stop gossip that comes from old Miss Rainwater. The cross roads store stocks sugar and coffee for nearby settlements and does most of its business on Saturdays; the rest of the time, the proprietor, Bob Strong, sits with the men on crates of goods set outside the door (Letter No. 66). Nearby settlements include Possum Valley, Owl Holler, Rough Edge, Flat Rock, Cross Roads, Briar Patch, and Alligator Bend (Letter No. 52).

Schools. Public education in the South in the late nineteenth century was generally lacking; illiteracy was widespread, and even after the Civil War, many rural people distrusted public schools (there were few outside the cities), considering them "pauper institution[s]" and opposed taxation for schools and compulsory education ("Great South"). Schools tended to be small and served a neighborhood, or settlement. Some areas levied taxes to fund the schools, and some charged per student. Many of the schools were named after the local churches, and others were called by the name of their communities.

Illiteracy rates in the backwoods counties of central Alabama were up to 25 percent, and schools held writing classes for adults. Betsy tells about her experience at the writing school held in "Malindy Forman's school'ouse on a Friday evenin." Malindy had dismissed her regular students early that day, but some of the boys, "trifling chaps," stayed to torment the adult writing class, whispering and peeping through the windows and the cracks in the log walls and laughing. The scholars sat on a long bench at a long, high desk. They had copy books, and as many of them wrote, they "sot and screwd [their] mouth round every letter" they wrote. All in the settlement, "young and old had turned out," including one boy from Possum Valley, not because they wanted to improve their writing but because of the dance that followed (Letter No. 9).

Betsy recognizes the value of education and wishes the poor children of Hillabee could travel to broaden their outlooks; "some of 'em ken git on the chimbly of thar cabins and see mighty nigh as fur as they've ever been." Betsy advises that "folks ought to larn all they ken" and disputes the idea that "book larnin was the ruination of some folks" since they were likely to go to ruin on their own. She cites as educational success stories Malindy Foreman, who makes more money teaching school than her father does, and Constantine Strong, for whom "a bag of cotton was more'n he ever made thar at home" but went to school, "larnt how to 'cipher,'" and went into business in Atlanta. (Letter No. 64).

Religion. Churches were important institutions in the backwoods; at least as important as the spiritual support it provided, the church "allowed the whole community to gather regularly and frequently" (Skaggs 82). Many of Betsy's

letters include conversations and events—particularly those involving romances—at the meeting house or at camp meetings.

Revivals, also called camp meetings or protracted meetings, were popular events. Torches allowed the singing and preaching to continue into the night, and a sermon after supper was usual (Ballew 107-08). Betsy reports on the doings at camp meetings and two- or three-day meetings only once in the Familiar Letters but several times in her columns in the Atlanta Constitution. The congregation took dinners because the program called for three sermons throughout the day and evening; attendees went not only for the social interaction, which was important, but because they were genuinely eager to hear the preaching and singing.

Betsy's letter about a meeting brings out the differences in congregations' beliefs regarding music during services: some accepted organ or piano music, but others wanted just the "good old-fashion, soul-stirrin' *hyme*." Her descriptions of the rowdy boys on the back bench are reminiscent of rowdy boys at churches in any era: giggling, "they all grabbed their noses and stuck thar heads down on the back er the bench in front of 'em, and one of 'em snickered out loud." An enthusiastic participant in the proceedings, old Miss Strong positions herself close to the front so she can shout out loud along with Brother Cole's sermon and is disappointed at first because his voice is so quiet, but as he gets louder, so does she (Letter No. 6). Betsy later offers insight into the behavior, saying she does not believe Miss Strong "would ever shout if she didn't think a gang er women would flock around her, and take on over her, and call her 'sister Strong, and try to git her to set down" (Letter No. 40).

Sermons were the centerpiece of services, and people talked of going "to preaching" when they went to church service or to a revival (Ballew 100). Women in particular loved "preachin" and would walk fifteen or twenty miles for an opportunity to listen to it (Cocke 148). Preachers, particularly revivalists, were often ill educated but felt a strong calling, and their congregations often wanted them just to be "'mighty in the scriptures'" (Carroll Milton qtd. in Ballew 101). In Hillabee, Uncle Hagan and the new preacher, Brother Cole, both preside at a protracted meeting, with both of them singing and preaching, and old Miss Strong is in attendance solely to hear Brother Cole's sermon (Letter No. 6).

Betsy's report of Brother Cole's sermon is humorous for both its content—Brother Cole's uneducated interpretation of the text "go to the ant, thou sluggard"—and for her rendition of the preacher's delivery. Readers can hear the cadences of modern-day television evangelists in Brother Cole's words, which exhort bad boys (the sluggards) to go to an aunt or other good woman in their lives to get themselves straightened out. Alabama native Mitchell B. Garrett reproduces a nineteenth-century sermon delivered in a similar way in an Alabama backwoods community, Hatchet Creek, and describes it as a "sort of chant" the preacher "drifted into" when the "power of the Holy Spirit descended upon him" (174-75).

Singings and singing schools were church-related, but they were also community activities. Singing school books were widely available; a Talladega, Alabama, newspaper, Our Mountain Home, contains advertisements on a regular basis in the 1870s for S. H. Perkins's singing school books. Mitchell Garrett

recalls singings on summer Sunday afternoons in Hatchet Creek. Although Primitive Baptists did not use the four-note sacred harp songs in services, they "always placed the big oblong book of song next to the inspired Bible as the source of religious comfort and joy" (204). The song book allowed singers to follow their musical lines using a different shape for each of the four notes: triangles, ovals, squares, and diamonds for fa, sol, la, and mi, respectively. The sacred harp singings and classes in Hatchet Creek were in the Primitive Baptist church; the class, often with more than forty participants, sat on benches arranged in a U, with the leader in the middle. When the leader gave the signal to begin, "[d]rawing in deep breaths, the singers let out staccato yells. The arm of the leader, exact as a metronome, beat time; and the enthusiastic songsters, at full cry, kept on the beat." The church was "crowded on such occasions, people standing in the doorways, along the walls inside and around the open windows outside, all singing lustily" (Garrett, M. 205-06). Singing school teachers were usually locals with a reputation for their own singing. They would draw up a contract that "specified the opening day, the length of the term, and the rate of tuition." If there was enough interest in the community, the school would commence. When the course was complete, the students would hold an all-day singing exhibition, and they often continued to meet informally to practice (Garrett, M. 207-08).

Betsy refers to singings and singing school, but she almost always focuses on the social aspect, usually involving the furtherance of or hindrance to some couple's romance. One exception is her reminiscing about her sister, Flurridy, who was "allers the best tenor singer of any gal at the singin school, and could

beat any of 'em at the 'do-ray-me's' and 'far-so-lars" (Letter No. 51). Singing school on a Sunday night, where Buddy sings bass and Sissy Tucker sings tenor, is the occasion of a chapter in the saga of Betsy's brother Buddy's thwarted romance with Sissy (Letter No. 84). Saleny describes a singing held at her house in "Shoulderbone Settlement, North Georgy" in a letter to Betsy:

> Weuns had claired the big house of putty nigh ever thing, an Bud he taken benches from the school'ouse and sot em agin the wall. [. . .] Ever las one er them gals was thar a settin on the benches a sayin nothing en lookin plum lack rows er dogwood blossoms. [. . .] The men had gathered in tother house a smokin an spittin terbacker juce all over my clean floor waitin fur Brether Hart. The boys wus in the passway, sum a peepin at the gals, an sum a takin dose er water constant [. . .].
>
> Brether Hart arriv and Bud he brought him in. The gals all fidgitted [. . .]. The men an boys cum crowdin in thick and fas twel the room couldn't a held nair nuther [. . . .] they looked plum lack biskits in a oven. [. . .]
>
> He [Brother Hart] looked powerful solum, an lowed, thu his nose:
>
> "Brethring an sistring: hit gins me grate pleasur to meet you on this occasion-ar. We are met here to praise the Lord as the Bible tells us to dew-ar. Turn to page 90 an lets sing that good old song that makes feel lack I could fly away on hits wings an be at rest-

> ar." He gun to git the fight hitch to the chune, movin his hans up an down, lookin plum lack a windmill an hummin, 'ar-sole-lar-sole-sole,' his hans movin faster as hit ud git faster. When he'd got hit, he lowed, 'Open your mouths an let er roll out; the sistring will please jine in now.' [. . . .] They all sun lowder an lowder; he thowed his head back an his hans riz higher an higher twel hit seemed as ef he'd git clean offen the floor. (unnumbered letter 8 Mar. 1884)

Hillabee's Houses

In the north Georgia cracker settlement that travel writer Clifton Johnson described in 1904, the houses are small, one-story wood structures, but only the poorest log cabins are without glass at the windows (522). A writer for Scribner's Monthly in 1874 calls the homes of prosperous farmer sand-hillers "loosely built, as the climate demands little more than shelter"; fireplaces provide the light after dark although the doors remain open ("Great South"). Most families lived in houses of one to three rooms without much in the way of furniture or fittings, and the houses had split log, or puncheon, floors and plain wooden walls. In houses with two rooms, one would generally be a kitchen/dining room and the other, a sitting room/bedroom. Dog trot houses, two cabins connected by a wide central porch, open at the front and back to allow ventilation throughout the cabin, were common throughout the South. A fireplace in each room typically supplied the only heat and light other than daylight that came through the open door, which

was seldom closed during the day regardless of the weather. Betsy's grandmother lives in a dog trot house, a "double log cabin with a pi a zer betwixt." A shed is attached to one end of the cabin, and a "ladder gwine up out'n hit to the loft over gran-maw's room." The cabin is surrounded by trees, and the walkway that goes "spang up to the door" is bordered with jonquils, narcissus, and "butter-an'-eggs" flowers. Cut sprigs of ground ivy in a pitcher decorate a shelf by the door (Letter No. 42).

Emily Burke, a nineteenth-century teacher in rural Georgia, describes a cracker home she visited as a "'small log house, very neat, [. . .] a bed, a table, two or three benches that were used instead of chairs and a very little crockery. The kitchen was a separate little building, of course scantily supplied with cooking utensils'" (qtd. in Boatwright 69). Outbuildings were common, and Betsy's family has a separate loom house, where they weave cloth for making the family's clothing and household items (Letter No. 10).

Even poor crackers took pride in their houses and wanted them to look nice. A woman with whom Buddy and Betsy stay overnight on their way home from visiting Saleny has papered her walls with "all sorts er show picters," apparently from a circus since one shows a man with his head in a lion's mouth, one shows an elephant, and one shows monkeys. Around the room is "ever kind of paper you ken think of, and advertisements all in big letters, some red and some yaller, but they was mostly picters" (Letter No. 16). Betsy tells her sister Flurridy Tennysy how Saleny, who is a "powerful hand to fix up her house," has her new home in St. Clair County "fixt up right nice." The bed in the sleeping loft

has a "blue and white chex counterpin" that Betsy and her mother had made and a mirror over a "little shelf that was kivered with the prettiest kind of paper, all cut in scallops and holes," and the one window's curtain is a "bran new piece er copperas cloth fringed" (Letter No. 14). *Copperas* is an old term for iron-, copper-, and zinc sulfate, all of which have been used for centuries in dyeing, tanning, and making ink. In the backwoods, copperas was probably leached from iron- or copper-rich mud or water and would have produced a green (from iron) or blue (from copper) color ("Copperas").

Betsy, naturally, describes her own house more closely than any other. After they marry, she and George Washington Higgins move into George's old house, which had been abandoned for some years. George builds a number of shelves for Betsy to store things on: her quilts and "counterpins," her comb and brush, and her books. Shelves at the back door hold the water bucket and wash pan, with a roller for hand towels nearby. A box nailed to the wall holds hand soap, and the water gourd hangs on a nail. George also makes a cupboard for dishes and food, a bench for the back entry, some stools, two log seats that Betsy covers with calico cushions, and pegs for hanging clothes up; Betsy hangs a curtain over the clothing to keep the dust off. (Letter No. 54). She and Caledony cut holly branches to hang over the mirror and gather wild flowers to put in drinking glasses on the fire-board (Letter No. 55).

After Betsy and George have seen the houses in Atlanta, they fix up their own house in Hillabee, whitewashing the exterior and the fence

and papering the interior walls and hanging up pictures George has bought in Atlanta. Maw gives Betsy a large rag carpet that covers almost the entire floor, and Betsy stuffs straw under it as a pad and tacks the carpet down; old Miss Green has never seen such a thing and steps "tip-toe and keerful around on the floor next to the wall, feerd she mought step on the karpet" and tells Betsy her house looks "monstrous fine" (Letter No. 79).

The People of Hillabee

The inhabitants of the Hillabee settlement are not, for the most part, stock characters. They are people with individual characteristics. Over the course of the Familiar Letters, readers get to know them and to love them or love to hate them. Plowman portrays them through the filter of Betsy Hamilton's letters to her cousin and sister, but they are, nevertheless, portrayed naturally and finely. Betsy is a plain-speaking young woman, so Pap's drunkenness is called just that. Betsy worries about him when he gets tight, but she does not excuse his drinking or disguise it in any way. The more exotic characters, such as old Mrs. Green, sometimes fall into stock mode, but Plowman gives them plenty of individual treatment; they are types, but their types are realistically portrayed, and they existed in the cracker settlements of Alabama's hill country.

Pipe-smoking and snuff-dipping cracker men, women, and children are familiar types. Cob pipes were common, and women also dipped snuff, chewing one end of straight piece of wood from hickory bark until it was soft and then dipping that end into the snuff and "'mop[ping] the gums and teeth adroitly, to

suck, and chew and spit to [their] heart's content;'" (D. R. Hundley qtd. in Boatwright 87). Old Miss Green and Arminty Pendergrass Rountree smoke stingy green, a malodorous variety of homegrown tobacco, in their pipes at Jinsy Whetlock's sickbed, and old Miss Freshours "axed maw fur a 'leetle grain' of snuff, then soused her old stick brush in it and wallupped it in her mouth, and sot and crossed her knees and turned into spittin' on the hath" (Letter No. 72).

Cocke claims that crackers were "not greatly addicted to indulgence in strong drink" although some local color writers certainly included liquor and drinking in their stories (151). A writer for Scientific American in 1897 found a still "in almost every cave and on every little brook among the hills" of Winston County, Alabama, where the settlements were "too far from markets to sell their corn for money, but they can convert it into good, straight liquor, carry it in kegs or jugs to the more thickly settled neighborhoods a few miles away and obtain a few dollars in money, some tobacco, coffee, and snuff" ("Clay Eaters").

Alcoholism is introduced early in the Familiar Letters, and it is a frequent theme. Betsy loves her alcoholic father and will "allers take keer of him drunk er sober" (Letter No. 23), but she also gets exasperated with his drunken bouts and wonders how they will affect her family and trips, particularly on outings. On the first trip Betsy ever makes to town, Pap "was tight and a hollerin' and a hoopin', and I seed we had to git him out of town, for buddy was a cryin', and everybody was a lookin' at us," and Betsy calls on another resident of Hillabee in town for the day, Nathan Sykes, to help get her father into the wagon (Letter No. 2). She fears that Pap will travel to Atlanta, where she and other Hillabee residents are

visiting the Exposition, and that if he does, he will "be shore to be tight. If Pap could git tight and walk straight, and not sho it, hit wouldn't be so bad; but he don't 'pear to keer who knows it" (Letter No. 30). Betsy recognizes—and appreciates—how a little drink can affect him as well: "Pap was soberin up, and had jist about enough whiskey in him to be funny" (Letter No. 50).

Pap likes Talladega, where he can get liquor (he gets so drunk at the Talladega fair he misses the man who goes up in a hot air balloon), but he "hadn't got much use" for Anniston, where only beer is sold, and it "ain't as good as what Maw makes outen dried apples and sweet 'taters, and hit ain't strong enough for pap" (Letter No. 3). Malicious gossips in Hillabee tell Betsy's mother, who would rather see her daughter dead than married to a drunkard, that Betsy's beau, George Washington Higgins, has been "a drinkin' hard and a gittin' into fusses over the river." Maw wants to protect her daughters from the pain of marriage to an alcoholic; she believes that if "pap had er let whiskey alone, he mought her been jestis of the peace or anything he was a mind to. He used to be 'squire' in Georgy what we moved from" but is now a carpenter who loves whiskey too much to leave it alone (Letter No. 21). Flurridy Tennysy loves a man who drinks, and although he promises to quit, he backslides; Maw remains unrelentingly against their marriage, and she warns Flurridy about hiding the truth about his alcoholism from herself, advising her not to lie for him or make excuses for him when he is drunk (Letter No. 25).

A distinctive feature of cracker dignity "consider[s] it decidedly underbred to omit any part of [a person's] name, however long it may be, or however

frequently it may be mentioned," even when husbands and wives refer to each other (Cocke 151). Betsy frequently, although not invariably, calls her friends by their full names when writing to Saleny, who knows them all because she had lived in Hillabee. Betsy's beau (and later her husband) is usually referred to as George Washington Higgins, not simply George; her gossiping nemesis is Arminty Pendergrass (often old Arminty Pendergrass), not just Arminty.

Family Ties. Separation from family and community, even temporary, was "traumatic" among backwoods inhabitants (Ballew 6). For most people, not just those in the backwoods, home has always been where the heart is, and twentieth-century Clay County residents reflect on that idea: "'Well, if you was ever in Clay County, and drank that Clay County water, then you'd always go back'" and "'that's where the sun shines the brightest, the stars twinkle the greatest, and the moon is the prettiest'" (Bobby Fables and Mira Carmichael qtd. in Grundy 254).

How much more potent those feelings would have been for people with little chance of seeing family and friends from whom they were separated by forbidding terrain, lack of transportation, and a lifestyle that allowed little time for leisure travel even if they had the means for it. Family and friends who moved away missed their old home, and they were, in turn, missed by their neighbors. Betsy reminisces to Saleny about their childhood days together in Hillabee. Betsy finds she "can't keep you [Saleny] outen my mind" and recollects the times they "made frog houses, and mud dolls, and called up doodles, and fished up jacks with straws, and waded in the branch down thar fernent old man Higginses horse

lot." She reminds Saleny about "the Sadday me and you run away from maw and stayed tell mighty nigh night; how we slipt in the kitchensafe and stole all her Sunday pies, and run down to Rocky Hollow and played with them Forman chillum." The letter also reflects Betsy's homesickness for Hillabee. Pap has moved the family to Mountain Side in Calhoun County to get away from the "fever an ager"; Betsy's maw "hain't been satisfied" since leaving Hillabee, and Betsy misses the old neighborhood, too (Letter No. 3). She tells Saleny in her next letter, "You don't know the good hit's done me to git back to our old settlement. Most everybody's been to see me and them that hasn't I've seed 'em at meetin'" (Letter No. 4).

Family separations were the occasion of most correspondence between backwoods inhabitants who wanted to be kept apprised of family and neighborhood news (Ballew 160), and the entire Familiar Letter series is based on this idea: Betsy keeps her cousin up to date on the doings of her old settlement, and when she is away from Hillabee visiting family and friends, she keeps the folks at home apprised of her doings. Hall Johnson and Cindy Curtis have married; "a whole string" of pap's fenceline caught fire and burned down; and Mose Turner and Ursuly Ann have moved to Mountain Side (Letter No. 3). Betsy tells her sister Flurridy Tennysy about going on horseback to visit Saleny and Jim Sidebottom in St. Clair County; Buddy accompanies her and returns home after a couple of days. She tells Flurridy a little about the journey, but her letter is primarily about the visit, including news of George Washington Higgins's asking Saleny for news of Betsy (Letter No. 14).

Family ties were strengthened by naming conventions. Children were often named after beloved siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins. Historical and inspirational names were also popular. Whatever the origin of a child's name, it was sure to have received considerable thought (Ballew 187). Betsy's sister Flurridy Tennysy is named after uncommon but melodic originals, two southern states (Letter No. 2), and Mrs. Gooden "saw numerous poems by Anonymous in her son Sammy's schoolbook, Guffey's Fifth Eelectrified Reader and, liking the name because "it was no common one," she named her baby after the prolific poet (Letter No. 18). Jinsy Whetlock's beau was named Andrew Jackson Lafayette Bonaparte Madison (Letter No. 65). Family and friends freely expressed their opinions about how children should be named, and Betsy "pretty nigh went distracted for three days and nights, studyin' up and tryin' to name [her twin babies] to suit all hands, and to git sich names as would sound like twins." She and George named their twin daughters after Betsy's and George's mothers and Betsy's favorite cousin and best friend, making sure the names "jingle sorter like poetry": Saleny Sophrony and Partheny Caledony (Letter No. 90).

Not just names but family traits, both physical and behavioral, were considered important by backwoods people; they became "part of the family's legacy to its members." Family members were identified with general family characteristics such as dry wit or the number of children in the family, and physical resemblance was eagerly sought, no less than in twenty-first century families (Ballew 172). Betsy tells Saleny that Ursuly Ann's youngest is a "fine boy chile, the very spit of hits paw" (Letter No. 3). Betsy's Aunt Dicy Ann and

Uncle Hes thought Betsy was "the very spit and image of Pap, and Cal [Betsy's friend Caledony] told 'em they couldn't please me no better'n to tell me I was the likeness of Pap" (Letter No. 43).

Neighborly Ties. David Ballew emphasizes the importance that hill country residents attached to independence and the subsistence way of life that allowed it, along with the key role of "supplemental help from a local exchange network of neighbors and kin" (6). Neighborhood borrowers is a theme on which Betsy waxes eloquently to Saleny, and she chronicles the typical exchanges of daily life. She tells Saleny as an aside to the general news that she has taken her aunt "a mess er kollards and a pint er that strong lie soap" when returning weaving supplies she had borrowed (Letter No. 1).

Ties to even irritating neighbors had to be kept strong when the good will of those neighbors was important to the smooth functioning of the community. Betsy complains, sometimes bitterly, about some of her neighbors—the Simmons boys; old Miss Potter, who always borrows and never returns; and the inveterate gossips old Miss Rainwaters and Arminty Pendergrass—but she puts up with them because to break with them would create rifts she and her family would find hard to live with in the larger community (Letter Nos. 4, 7, 10, 11, and others). She finds the attitude of city folks to their neighbors "monstrous curis. [. . .] They never pretends to borry nuthin and some of 'em don't know the name of their next door neighbors." In Hillabee, people "knowd all the neighbors and whar they come from and who all they was a kin to" (Letter No. 69).

Gossip in small communities can affect inhabitants in many ways; everyone knows everyone else, and most are related in one way or another. Simple conversation can relay information someone would rather not have everyone else know, and malicious gossip can be devastating. The first letter in the series tackles gossip in Hillabee head on: Betsy hears from her maw (Partheny) that Saleny is engaged to Jim Sidebottom. The news travels to Betsy in a chain that starts with old Mrs. Rainwaters and goes through ten women, including Betsy's aunt Nancy Baker at a quilting. Betsy names Arminty Pendergrass as Hillabee's primary gossip, but many others obviously enjoy the pastime as well. Aminty has heard the news at a "two days meetin," and it had traveled to the meeting from a candy pulling (Letter No. 1). Clearly, whenever people gathered, they talked, and the talk was about their friends and family.

Neighborly concern also meant the entire community pitched in when anyone needed help and particularly when anyone became ill or died. Sitting with an ill neighbor, sending food or labor to help with chores, or even making a coffin "were duties neighbors owed one another" and were unrelated to anyone's liking for the individual or the family (Ballew 131). When George Washington Higgins falls gravely ill with "the malicious fever," the house overflows with neighbors who want to help or who just want to lend their presence. Caledony knows "thar wasn't no chance to git shet of 'em without makin some of 'em mad" when too many at one time appeared, so she moves "the old women and thar pipes in t'other house, so George couldn't smell ther smoke nor hear ther talk" (Letter No. 108).

Maw and old Miss Hazel have had a serious falling out, but when Miss Hazel is ill and Betsy goes to help nurse her, "the first one I seed when I got in was *maw* a rubbin of ole Miss Hazel's hands and feet. Maw is tore down high tempered, and gits hoppin mad sometimes, but jes let a body git sick, or need any sort of help, and she is right thar to put her shoulder to the wheel." After Miss Hazel dies, the women of the community make a shroud for her and sit up with the corpse, singing and talking (Letter No. 109).

Hospitality. Historian Elliott Gorn found that "'elaborate rituals of hospitality, demonstrative conviviality, and kinship ties' guided social interaction" in the southern backwoods (qtd. in Ballew 54). Hospitality was a prized trait, even (or perhaps especially) among the very poor. A north Alabama hill county man advised architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who was traveling through the South, "'If you want to fare well in this country [. . .] you stop to poor folk's housen'" (qtd. in Ballew 67). Betsy, her pap, her brother Buddy, George Washington Higgins, Caladony, and Lize Monroe have traveled by train from Atlanta to Talladega, and Bill Roberson meets them with a horse and wagon when they arrive after dark, expecting to drive home to Hillabee in the moonlight. Instead, it rains hard along the way, and the mules pulling the wagon refuse to go any further. The light from a backwoods cabin beckons, and the woman living there, Mrs. Coggins, tells the "benighted" travelers that she "haint the heart" to turn anybody away in the rain. She puts the children in bed with her; Betsy, Caladony, and Lize sleep in the children's bed, and the men sleep on pallets made of her "power of quilts" on the floor in front of the fire. Mrs. Coggins "riz by the

crack er day, and filled the fire plum full of sweet taters," and she baked corn dodgers and "briled some fat meat on the coals, and wouldn't charge a cent for it" (Letter No. 32). Not charging for the time, trouble, and foodstuffs expended on lodging unexpected guests was customary (Ballew 92).

Visits among neighbors "nurtured" community relations (Ballew 33), and backwoods residents were "sometimes actually offended and chastened if one of their neighbors did not stop and break bread with them"; these meals often turned into overnight visits (Ballew 65). Betsy details the difficulties she and George Washington Higgins, who are courting, have in talking to each other when George stops by Aunt Nancy's house to see Betsy one evening. Uncle Billy asks George in to visit a while, and he "sot in to smokin and axin George town news." Then old Miss Freshours "come in to 'set a bit,'" and Betsy knows the conversation will last until bedtime because her uncle is so fond of visitors. Uncle Billy wants to show George his pigs, so the entire group removes to the pigpen. George and Betsy manage to steal a few moments for private conversation, but George is thwarted in his attempt to invite Betsy to go with him to the writing school on Friday night (Letter No. 7).

Some visitors stayed anywhere from a night to several weeks. Betsy complains about neighbors' keeping the house "jam full er company" and imposing on her aunt's hospitality "for their own convenience" in conjunction with a church meeting of several days' duration. "Mis Gooden and all her gang er 4 chillun" descend on Aunt Nancy and proceed to eat her out of house and home, make messes in the house that Nancy and Betsy must constantly clean up, get

dirty themselves and impose on their hosts to do laundry for them, and make them all late for the new preacher's appearance at the meeting. Betsy does, however, enjoy "company when its folks you ax and want; then you ken fix fur 'em and enjoy thar company" (Letter No. 6).

Isolation, the result of limited transport and hilly, wooded terrain that was difficult to cross even in good conditions, meant crackers were closely tied to those they lived near, often including kin, and visits outside the community were "special occasions" (Ballew 4). Staying longer made a difficult trip more worthwhile. Betsy thinks the visits town folks make are not worth the all trouble of getting dressed up as they do: "Instead of fetchin ther work, and stayin all day, and gwine home in time to milk and git supper, why they flirt in and frisk out, and leave ther name on a little piece of paste-board, and call that a visit. [. . .] They don't set no longer'n it would take old Miss Green an old Miss Freshours to light ther pipes and ax the news" (Letter No. 103).

CHAPTER II

HARD WORK FROM SUNRISE TO SUNSET

"I'm so tired er stayin' at home, hit haint been nothin' but work, work, work, 'cep when I was settin' up with the sick at Miss Roberson's."

Betsy Hamilton, Familiar Letters, Letter No. 13

Life in the backwoods settlements involved hard work, both inside and outside. Subsistence farming required daily attention to the land and the livestock, and keeping family members fed, clothed, and housed required labor from sunup to sundown most days. That labor, though, allowed families a degree of independence hardly understood in the twenty-first century. Betsy Hamilton considers it the "bread of contentment" to be "never consarned [. . .] about what we eat nor what we wore; we made it all at home; planted the cotton, ginned it, carded it, spun it, wove it, and sewed it ourselves. Raised our own hogs and corn and eat the meat" (Letter No. 94).

COMMUNAL WORK

Some of the work was too much for one farmer or even one family, and neighbors pitched in to help. Log-rollings and house raisings were the most common of these communal efforts, and quiltings were a way for women to share the burden of the constant round of sewing required to keep their families in

clothes, linens, and other household items. These occasions always ended with a social activity. In fact, historian David Ballew suggests that they were "more memorable as social events than as workings" and that the festivities that followed the work were the most important part of the day. At log-rollings, the men cut and burned trees to clear land for planting, and the women cooked a big meal for everyone; a dance "naturally followed, sometimes lasting into the early morning hours" (Ballew 68-70).

Old Miss Roberson invites everyone to a house raising and quilting, "and we staid all day and then danced tel late that night. [. . .] When Miss Roberson has a gatherin at her house she axes every body in the settlement, and allers has abundance to eat, but she is obleege to, fur they are the banginest folks to eat I ever seed." The women quilt while the men raise a house "in the cornder er the yard" for the boys to sleep in, Mr. Roberson to make shoes in, and the boys to shell corn in on rainy days. Betsy's account tells Saleny much more about the gossiping and flirting that occur at the quilting than about any sewing that is done (Letter No. 11).

Neighbors helped each other at other times as well. When the weather turns cold, Betsy sends George to Miss Potter's with a load of wood, "sumpen to eat, and some old clothes" that would help "keep her and the chillum warm" because even though Miss Potter is "mighty trifling and do-less [. . .] she has been sick here of late" (Letter No. 75).

WOMEN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE

Plowman focused her sketches on aspects of life that she knew best and that the majority of her readers was most interested in: the women's sphere. While she alludes to some of the work done by men at home and in the community, by far most of her references to labor have to do with the never-ending cycle of work required to take care of a family. In order for backwoods households to maintain self-sufficiency, the women were as driven by seasonal tasks as the men were. Women had to turn their hands to physical labor in the fields when not enough men were available. Betsy does not dwell on the labor she and her family perform (after all, the sketches were intended to be entertainment, and stories about constant work would not be as entertaining as stories about courting, parties, gossip, and other diversions). However, she frequently mentions work in passing and sometimes laments how much there is to do and how hard it is. Saleny, however, goes into more detail about the daily grind in her letters to Betsy.

At the Atlanta Exposition, Betsy sees machinery and chemical processes that ease household tasks and waxes enthusiastic about the knitting machine that knits a sock in an unheard-of four and a half minutes; a loom that moves so fast "you couldn't see the shettle"; a spinning machine; dye-stuffs; and soap made "in fifteen minits that hit takes Aunt Nancy and Maw all day long and part er the night to git done—and they don't pay no 'tention to the moon nuther." Betsy thinks it "worth the show money to see 'em fillin spools with store-bought sewin' thread" (Letter No. 27).

However, she also discovers that not everyone is enamored of the new technology. George buys her one of the new stoves and a sewing machine, but her maw and Aunt Nancy, who have "cooked in pots and ovens on the fire place all thar lives, and most burnt thar eyes out," do not want "nairy one of 'em a stove." Maw believes there is a difference in the taste of food cooked on a stove, especially cornbread, and she will not eat it. Betsy always cooks her pap an ash cake on the hearth and broils his meat over the fire because he is partial to food cooked the old way, although she cooks all her and George's food on the new stove (Letter No. 79).

Even the basics for housekeeping were homemade on a subsistence farm. Candles were a household necessity. Saleny makes tallow candles, putting wax berries in the boiling tallow to whiten it and myrtle leaves in for a sweet odor; her grandmother spins the cotton wicks for the candles, and Saleny dips the wicks in turpentine and alum to "make em burn clar" and then hangs them in the passageway of her dog trot house to bleach. However, hard work could sometimes be all for naught, as Saleny discovers when the dogs eat her newly made tallow candles and the meat in Miss Mac's smokehouse (Unnumbered letter, 22 Mar. 1884). An accomplished homemaker, Betsy wins a prize at the Talladega fair for "the best home-made lie soap" (Letter No. 24). Her grandmother makes lye soap "'on the new of the moon in March'" and "never had no luck a makin it of it 'on the waste of the moon,' hit allers went back to lye, and wasn't strong to do no good." Grandmother keeps her soap grease in earthenware jars and uses hickory ash with it to make strong lye (Letter No. 44).

Wash day came regularly, and some women liked to set aside Monday for that task. Saleny's grandmother stirs her out of bed early one Monday morning, citing the week's rushing by already and "nuthin's done." Bud sets a large pot on the fire to boil, and Saleny makes sure "that lie soap ud lather." Since Saleny's clothes have gotten yellow and dingy, she adds indigo to the rinse water to whiten them (Saleny's Letter No. 8). Wintertime wash days were particularly difficult without sunshine for drying the clothes; Betsy and her maw "jist ketched the water under the drip and washed in t'other house, and dried the clothes on cheers 'fore the fire." She acknowledges that her brother may have the worst of the work in the rainy season since he is responsible for keeping the fires going (Letter No. 35).

In addition to the work required just to maintain the family, women raised crops and livestock to sell for cash or trade for goods in town. Betsy sells onions, dried apples, roasted peanuts, seed potatoes, pumpkins, beef, chickens, eggs, and a pig to raise money for her trip to the Atlanta Exposition (Letter No. 25). Her grandmother gives her "a little poke of garden seeds" to take home from her visit and gives her detailed instructions on how to plant them: "she all-ers plants her inguns [onions] and taters and sich as growed down in the ground, on the dark er the moon, and her peas and beans on the light, but she allers planted her corn on the dark er the moon, the jints was shorter and the years was longer and heavier" (Letter No. 54).

The constant round of work both inside and outside took its toll on women, whose skin darkened from the sun and whose hands became callused and

stained. Betsy's grandmother's hands "was mity nigh black, they was so blue with dye, in particular her finger nails" (Letter No. 44). Betsy tells how Aunt Nancy's generation treated sun-darkened hands: they "tied 'em up in wet wheat bran the over night, and sometimes they'd wash 'em in butter milk and sleep in thar gloves." George wants Betsy to whiten her hands that way "when we uns got to livin' in town" ("Betsy Hamilton to 'Dixie' of the Southern Household," 29 Jul., 1882). Betsy and Caladony "hain't spent nair idlesome day," and Betsy attributes their good health, heartiness, and red faces to work (Letter No. 25).

In the Kitchen

Women were responsible for cooking and for preserving food for future use. A nineteenth-century travel writer describes the sand-hillers' diet as "barbarous as elsewhere among the agricultural classes in the South—corn bread, pork and 'chick'n'" since "farmers rarely think of killing a cow for beef or a sheep for mutton; hot and bitter coffee smokes morning and night on the tables where purest spring water, or best of Scuppernong wine might be daily placed" ("Great South"). When Betsy and George marry, they are "powerful hands fur biled dinners" but have only one "dinner pot," so Betsy uses Miss Gooden's trick of cooking beans, potatoes, squash, butter beans, and okra in separate little bags all together in a single pot with a small piece of meat to season everything at once (Letter No. 54).

Keeping a fire for coffee and cooking took care: "the fireplace ain't never clear of coals—we allers kivers up a chunk 'the night over,' and of a morning it

aint no trouble to start the fire and the hath don't git cold 'enduring' of the winter" (Letter No. 73). Cooking was often done in a building separate from the main house, even on modest farms. In the winter, though, the other building is too "ill-convenient," so Betsy cooks in the main house, where the "fireplace is big, the hath is wide, and we've got a good rack to hang the dinner-pot on, and a big, flat rock in the jam to set anything to keep it hot." George keeps the fire going for her, flinging on "a pile of oak chips and bark to make good coals," and the fire heats up her biscuit oven before she knows it. She has a "tribbet" as well, to hold the "new fangled" coffee pot from Atlanta. She broils spareribs in the fireplace, hanging them over the fire and basting them; cooks biscuits, flitters, flapjacks, and ash-cake ("corn bread baked in the ashes") on the hearth; and roasts sweet potatoes in the ashes. George cooks feed for his cows, but he does so in "tother house" because he "don't like to smell the cotton seed and cornfield peas a bilin'" in the main house (Letter No. 73).

Pap likes buttermilk with his meal; Betsy gets milk from the heifer Uncle Billy gave her as a wedding present, and in order to make buttermilk in the winter, she has to keep her "jairs of milk" near the fire to "make it turn." Her maidservant, Lethe, does most of the churning since Betsy likes to eat butter but does not like to churn (Letter No. 73). George fashions a spring house from a "big holler tuperlo tree standing in the branch below the free-stone spring" by putting a door that locks on the hollow side where the water runs through it so Betsy has place to keep milk and butter fresh (Letter No. 55).

Betsy makes "simmon beer" from "simmonses and sweet taters and biled corn and dried apples, and handful of locuses—a 'leetle grain' of sugar," and Jinsy likes the simmon beer with Betsy's ginger cakes. She also grows peanuts in her "goober patch" (Letter No. 73). Betsy, Flurridy Tennysy, and Maw dry apples and harvest onions during the summer for use all year round; Betsy also sells some of the onions for cash (Letter No. 13). Betsy's grandmother makes "squinch perzarves" (quince preserves) and "water million rind pickles" to eat year round (Letter No. 43).

On hog-killing day, Betsy and her maw "dried up the fat, and biled up the chitterlings and the feet," and they "made some souse (head cheese, some calls it) and put in good apple vinegar and [. . .] stuffed some of our sausage and hung em up and put up some in shucks. Maw seasoned 'em most two [sic] hot of red pepper for me, but [. . .]. You can't git 'em too hot fur pap—nor too full of sage fur George." Betsy likes eggs cooked with hog brains, and George is fond of lye hominy; her maw "can't be beat a making of it pretty and white" (Letter No. 73).

Fixing food for journeys was common in the nineteenth century and a necessity for trips in the backwoods. Before Betsy, Flurridy Tennysy, and Pap set off for the Atlanta Exposition, Maw fixes "ever thing on the place" to put in the white oak split basket Pap has made for them to "tote our vittles in." Maw cooks "pumkin and tater custards [. . .] and hard bile[s] ever aig on the place, and bake[s] salt riz light bread" (Letter No. 26). A "poan of corn light bread" is also good traveling food (Letter No. 62).

At the Loom and the Needle

People in the backwoods wore little in the way of store-bought goods during the week; anything store-bought was more likely to be saved for church or frolics. Carroll Milton, a northeast Mississippi backwoodsman, describes his everyday clothes as "a pair of 'jersey trousers somewhat remarkable for the many blue patches' and a coat of 'faded dingy jeans,'" and his Sunday clothes included a "freshly washed shirt so as to look 'respectable'" (Ballew 117). Teacher Emily Burke found that virtually everything her pupils wore, even hats and shoes in some families, was homemade (Boatwright 93). Homespun cloth was strong, if not attractive, and served well for work clothing. It was aptly named: the cotton had to be picked, cleaned, combed, and spun. The spun thread had to be dyed (the dyes having been made from local herbs, roots, and minerals that had been gathered by hand) and then woven into whole cloth, which was cut and sewn into garments, sheets, towels, and other fabric goods for the household.

Betsy's grandmother, whose dress is old-fashioned since "one patron was all she wanted, and she'd had hit 25 years" (Letter No. 45), wears homemade clothes: a "frock [that] struck her above her shoe tops, and she had on a long apron and a cape, and her head was tied up with a piece of new homespun cloth, check er blue and check er copperas, thread about to the warp and two and two in the fillin" (Letter No. 43). On a visit to Chandler Springs to see the governor speak, Jake Simmons wears "copperas pantaloons and a blood red calico shirt and no coat, and his daddy's old vest struck him mightily nigh to his knees in front, and was split wide open in the back" (Letter No. 57).

Store-bought goods, such as calico and trimmings for bonnets, were more likely to have been paid for in trade than with hard cash. "Craps" (crops) such as corn, potatoes, peas, and a little cotton, along with eggs, berries, and chickens were only a few of the items industrious girls and women took to town to trade ("Clay-Eaters"). The opportunities for trading sessions, however, were few and far between since the time-consuming and difficult trips to town generally occurred only when the family was in short supply of staples such as coffee, sugar, and salt (Ballew 15). Buddy trades cotton for goods, and Betsy takes eggs, red pepper, and "good strong home made soap" to trade for store bought goods (Letter No. 3).

Buying ready-made cloth with the money from onions she sells in town, Betsy aims to cut down the time she spends producing cloth (Letter No. 13). Seeing thread and cloth at the Atlanta Exposition that has been dyed in Mississippi, Betsy wishes Maw had some because "her finger nails is dyed blue, continually, putty night all the time" (Letter No. 28). Black dye is made with "log'ood ooze, and a pot of strong soap suds," and the cloth is dipped "in fust then t'other, tel the dye was sot" (Letter No. 43). Another dye recipe Betsy uses is "sweet gum and willow bark, and a little log 'ood sot with copperas and hickory lye" ("Betsy Hamilton to 'Dixie' of the Southern Household" 29 Jul., 1882).

Betsy visits the cotton exhibit at the Atlanta Exposition, where clothing supposedly made in a day is displayed, and she expresses irritation at what she sees as false advertising: "[H]it taken a heap longer than *one day* to make 'em. Time we picked the cotton and hauled it with pap's steer to old man Roberson's

gin'ouse, what Iky driv the mules and ginned it; then me and maw and Flurridy Tennysy sot up of nights cardin and spinnin of the thread, and pap he dug the roots to dye it, and maw she dyed the thred and sot with hickory lye and copperas, and Flurridy Tennysy wove it, and I cut it out, and sot and sewed it with my fingers, and spun the thread to sew it with, hit taken mor'n any one day" (Letter No. 29).

Backwoods women were no less fond of adornment than city women and aspired to "a new dress and bonnet [. . .] and, above all, a new neckerchief (Cocke 147). Betsy does not wear a neckerchief, but a handkerchief tucked under her belt. Cracker bonnets were "'cotton quilted . . . with deep curtains hanging down behind, covering the ears and shoulders'" (J. S. Buckingham qtd. in Boatwright 70), and bonnets in the towns were often trimmed with feathers, ribbon, and artificial flowers (Boatwright 75). Maw uses a "bran new scrop er store-bought bed-ticken'" to make Betsy a "riticule out'n it to hang on my arm to put my hankercher Flurridy gin me and gloves Aunt Nancy knit me, and sich like in" for her trip to the Atlanta Exposition (Letter No. 26). The girls in Hillabee are not immune to the lure of fashion. Tildy, who has been to Anniston with Betsy and seen the new fashions exhibited by school girls, has "taken the scissors and chopped her hair off short in front, and hit hangs down on her forid like pap's old riding nag. They call it bangs and well they might, for hits the banginest way I ever seed hair fixed yit. But Tildy's try to be in the fashion if she had to crap off a little piece of her year" (Letter 3).

Men's clothing could be as colorful as women's. After traveling to Georgia and Florida, George Washington Higgins returns to Hillabee, and Betsy finds him dressed in "store bought clothes, and they fit him tel he put me in a mind of pictures I've seed 'fore now." She thinks he will never again wear the homespun jeans old Miss Green wove and old Miss Freshours cut and sewed for him. His finery on the trip home includes "low quarted shoes, and red striped sox [. . .] and his chex cravat, and he had a big blue and red silk hankercher, with cinnamon draps on it" (Letter No. 48).

Quilting, now a hobby, was a necessary task in the nineteenth-century backwoods. Quilts, not store-bought blankets, kept the family warm in bed, but these household necessities were also an outlet for creativity and artistry. Saleny's quilts "would make your mouth water to look at" and are "pieced by mighty nigh ever patron you ken think of." Saleny is also lucky in Jim's willingness to buy new calico for use in her quilts (Letter No. 14), and she makes a quilt that contains 3,690 pieces (Letter No. 83).

Betsy and Saleny name some of the quilt patterns they make in references that are useful to quilt researchers. Saleny's include "hit or miss," "yellow rose of Texas," "wild goose chase," the "lone star of Texas," the "Irish chain," and the "fruit basket" (Letter No. 14). A gypsy woman predicts that Betsy's aunt will give her a "seven star" quilt as a wedding present (Letter No. 22). Betsy takes pride in her quilts and enters the four prettiest ones in the Talladega fair but does not win a prize for any of them: the "rose of the vine," the "tulip and the bud," the "rising sun," and the "lone star of Texas," although she does win for the "the best double

wove counterpin" (Letter No. 23). Betsy, wanting to reconcile with Flurridy after her sister's elopement, visits her and gives her "my 'hit or miss' quilt" (Letter No. 51). Saleny asks Betsy for fabric scraps from her store-bought clothes to use in a "wheel of fortune" quilt, and she discusses the common practice of making up numerous quilt tops without following through on the backing, filling, and quilting steps: "They say you skasely find a house in Sincler county, what they haint got a passle of quilts packed away not quilted—and they keep 'em for years and they don't do 'em no good 'cept to take 'em out once't in a while and show 'em to company" (Letter No. 96).

CHAPTER III

FROLICS, COURTSHIP, AND MARRIAGE

"They can't have nothin in this settlement without windin up with a dance."

Betsy Hamilton, Familiar Letters, Letter No. 11

People needed occasional relief from the unrelenting grind of work required to survive in the backwoods. During the week, they visited with nearby family and friends, and weekly church services provided an opportunity for wider socializing. Families sometimes threw a party—supper and a dance—for visitors, and the social aspects of communal labor were fully exploited with dinners and dances (called "frolics") following the day's work (Ballew 19). Because of the isolation of the tiny backwoods settlements, change in the "social order" was slow, and their "folkways" were kept intact; Wayne Flynt names nineteenth-century activities that continued in Clay County well into the twentieth century: "[c]amp-meeting revivals, protracted meetings, quilting bees, house raisings [. . .] Homecomings, decoration days, family reunions, and Sacred Harp singings" (Foreword xiii). These are some of the social events Betsy writes about to Saleny.

LOVE SPRINGS ETERNAL IN HILLABEE: FROLICS AND COURTSHIP

Social life, for the most part, was centered on the home, and social activities were designed to throw young people together for the purpose of getting them married and started on raising their own families. Starting one's own family fulfilled community and family expectations; not doing so was generally considered a mark of failure, at least for men (Ballew 112).

Backwood Frolics

Betsy's comment about the frequency of dances in Hillabee speaks directly to this concern with getting the young people matched up and married off (Letter No. 11). A strong recurring theme in the Familiar Letters is romance; Betsy and George's courtship, marriage, and family form the centerpiece of the series, but Betsy reports on the trials and tribulations of numerous couples. Letter No. 1 is a declaration that she does not believe the gossip about Jim Sidebottom and Saleny's engagement since Jim is an unsuitable match. Almost every letter deals, at least in passing, with someone's romance, failed romance, engagement, or wedding. Plowman, consciously or unconsciously, struck the vein that was so important in backwoods communities: keeping the family unit going in order to keep the community strong. As long as the young men and women of the community formed lasting family units and produced their own children, the community would continue to thrive.

Courting was an integral part of all the settlement-wide activities from church to writing school to communal work days, and private parties provided

even more opportunities for young people to get together. However, the courting was monitored carefully by the older generation: "A young man must not be too presuming, and a maiden must not be too easily won, or one is considered reprehensible for 'sassyness' and the other is condemned for 'forrudness'" (Cocke 149), and chastity was "rigidly enforced" (Boatwright 88).

Community-wide "sings" were popular activities, and several dozen "young folks" regularly gathered in homes for them on Sunday afternoons. Wintertime parties were common and featured dancing, often called "frolics" or "reels"—or games that approximated dancing in communities where religion forbade it. In Stealing Partners, couple skip around the room while music is playing, and the odd man out "steals" a girl from one of the couples and skips away with her; the new odd man out follows suit, and so on. In Twistification, the boys line up on one side of the room and the girls on the other; a couple marches in a dance step down the middle and swings when it reaches the end. The entire group promenades, and the couples reform the lines for another session. Fancy Four is similar to Twistification, but two couples at a time promenade (Johnson 522-23). Zitella Cocke describes dancing in cracker settlements as primarily "a solo performance," with the ability to "out-dance another, or 'break somebody else down' [. . .] a great evidence of skill" (148). Dinner usually followed a dance and often featured barbecue, chicken pie, peach cobbler, and fresh fruit (Cocke 150).

Fall and winter were the busy season socially since farm work was less onerous during those months. Misissipian Samuel Tapscott reported that his

community had at least a dance a week "'after the frost fell in October.'" The neighborhood fiddler played "'breakdown melodies'" that "got the feet moving and the heart racing" (qtd. in Ballew 71). Christmas was an important time of year both because it fell in the natural season for socializing and because it provided an opportunity for celebration and festivity. Betsy goes to a candy pulling, a quilting, and "frolicks" over Christmas. At Miss Roberson's quilting, the "old folks quilted and the chillun parched goobers and pop-corn and pulled candy, and them that didn't dance played ever game you ken name that's got kissin' in it." The party was called a "'pound party,' for ever body was to fetch a pound of somethin' to help out, sich as candy and ree-sins and the like," and the supper feast included "backbone pie and no end of tater custards" (Letter No. 76).

Carroll Milton's descriptions of quilting parties make it clear that sewing was "merely a pretext for [holding a] quilting" (Ballew 143). Although the quiltings Milton attended resulted in production of "'shirts, dresses, tent cloths and wagon sheets in profusion,'" he also took the opportunity for "'billing some of the dear angels after the stitching was done'" (Carroll Milton qtd. in Ballew 143). Quiltings were often followed by games involving "walking, singing, talking, and guessing." In Choosing, a group of girls would walk in a circle, singing "'Thar's a flower in the garden for you, young man. / Thar's a flower in the garden for you, / Come and pick it while you can. / Thar's a flower in the garden for you, young man, / A flower in the garden for you.'" A young man would address one of the girls by name and ask if she would walk with him. If the girl agreed, the two would walk hand in hand to join a procession of promenading

couples (Cocke 150-51). The quilting at Miss Roberson's also features kissing games such as "stealin partner" and "fishin' for love," possibly some of the same games that allowed Milton to "bill" his "dear angels" (Letter No. 76).

At Miss Roberson's Christmas quilting, a finished quilt is taken off the frame, and the women throw it over the head of one of the girls, who is then thought to be the one who would marry next, in this case, Jinsy Whetlock (Letter No. 76). This scene mirrors a practice from the slave quarters described in Christmas on the Old Time Plantation (Moore, I. 15).

MARRIAGE: CONTINUATION OF THE FAMILY TRADITION

Frolics provided opportunities for courtship, and the object of courtship was marriage. Weddings were usually held in the home, and only the families of the bride and groom and their good friends were invited, although some weddings were conducted in church for convenience or so all the couple's friends could attend. A festive supper followed, and dancing and games came after supper. Letter No. 5 describes a wedding for which Betsy is asked to "wait on," or serve as an attendant to, the bride. The sitting room of the bride's house is "plum full," and the guests, shiny clean and in their best clothes, "was all a sittin; around like they was in meetin; none of 'em wasn't a sayin' a word." The supper afterward includes "tater custards" and turkey, and there are dancing and games: Fishing for Love and Grind the Bottle, both kissing games. Most of the weddings in Hillabee are conducted at the court house in town but weddings at "meetin" (church) are becoming more popular. Betsy plans to help decorate the meeting house with "a

passle er cedar and bamboo briar vines, and sich like" for Malindy Foreman and Luke Hooker's wedding (Letter No. 22).

Preparations for Betsy and George's wedding involve making the wedding dress, which Betsy, Caladony, and Flurridy Tennysy make from cotton and wool "spun truck" that is expensive at twenty-five cents a yard, "brown with red and yaller blossoms on it and green leaves. Aunt Nancy plans to give Betsy "a feather bed, and some counterpins, and a seven star quilt, and a pair er white ducks and a passle er knitten cotton [. . . .] and more besides" since Betsy is marrying someone who suits her, and Uncle Billy will give her "two er my Buckshair pigs" (Letter No. 22). However, the wedding is delayed, and Betsy does not wear the brown dress with red and yellow flowers when she and George finally get married. Instead, Caladony helps her pick out her "finery" in Talladega, including a "dove-colored worsted frock" and a hat "big enough to keep the sun off" (Letter No. 52).

Lovers gave tokens of affection such as a lock of their hair to their sweethearts. George Washington Higgins gives Betsy a love token while he is courting her: in a small box, he places "a little round lookin-glass that jest fit the box, and writ on a piece er paper in the box was, 'Look within fur the one I love'" (Letter No. 8). When they become engaged, he gives her a ring, and after their engagement is delayed and he returns from an extended trip, he gives her "a par of year bobs" and a "shell breast pin" to match, with a gold plate that is engraved "Betsy H" (Letter No. 48).

Children were expected to marry someone of whom their parents approved. Men who drank, gambled, raced, or fought did not usually rate highly with parents, who knew those men's chances of making a good living to support their daughters were less than those of sober, hard-working men. Becky Sykes loves Pete Turner but "looked shame and helt her head down" with him because her parents do not approve of him since he "gits on sprees and runs horses and fights chickens" (Letter No. 6). After Betsy and George Washington Higgins are engaged, Miss Thompson and old Arminty Pendergrass spread false rumors about George Washington Higgins's drinking and fighting. Betsy's maw is "is about to take the roof off'n the top er the house" about the engagement, and George works hard to convince her that he is a sober, nonviolent man who will take good care of her daughter (Letter No.21).

Couples occasionally eloped, but doing so was considered disgraceful (Ballew 178). The Hamiltons go through the trauma of Flurridy Tennysy's elopement with Thomas Jefferson Billingham. Maw has long objected to Flurridy's intended because he is a heavy drinker, but Flurridy Tennysy decides to marry him anyway (Letter No. 40). With Lize Monroe's assistance, Flurridy sneaks out of the house with her "piller-slip of clothes" and walks with her fiancé into town to be married at the court house. Maw rants against the renegade couple, warning them in absentia that they should not darken her door; Pap is angry, too, but he maintains silence, to Maw's disgust, although neither of them considers going after the couple. Maw retracts her promise of gifts and does not give Flurridy anything for her new household (Letter No. 49). Betsy and

Caladony finally take matters into their own hands a couple of months later and escort Flurridy home, where she and Maw reunite tearfully (Letter No. 55).

The infair was a family celebration of a marriage. The day after the wedding, relatives would "'awaken the newly-weds with a serenade by beating on pots, pans and tubs'" and "demand to be admitted for refreshments." The groom's parents would host a supper, the actual infair, and the bride would bring out her new things—gifts and the things she had made and collected over the years in preparation for her own home. After the infair, the couple would take their belongings to their new home (Ballew 180). Mitchell B. Garrett recalls infairs in Hatchet Creek, near the fictional location of Hillabee, but Plowman does not give Betsy and George an infair. All the neighbors and relatives visit them at their new house, and Betsy is obliged to pull out her quilts to show them off and to share the "patron" of her wedding dress since it is made in the new fashion from Talladega (Letter No. 53).

New couples often lived with one or the other's parents until they could afford a house or a piece of land to farm. This was not a hardship for most families since they were tied so closely together that the thought of a daughter's or son's moving out was distressing (Ballew 180-81). Maw and Pap want Betsy and George to live with them, but George has a house ready for Betsy, the house where he was born, and Betsy is anxious to move fully into her role as George's wife in their new home (Letter No. 53).

CONCLUSION

"Betsy Hamilton's portrayal of life among 'Southern Crackers and Darkies' is purely Educational. It is true to life—a lesson not obtained from books. To the old it recalls many scenes of youth, and to the young, it brings not a picture, but real life in Grand-mamma's day."

J. H. Richardson, President of Sweetwater Seminary for Young Ladies, undated

BETSY HAMILTON'S BACKWOODS

Betsy and her gang in Hillabee bear great resemblance to the cracker communities described in contemporaneous accounts, from the houses they live in to the camp meetings and frolics they attend. Clothing, food, and work—both men's and women's—are described as nineteenth-century travel writers described them.

Further, Betsy Hamilton's Familiar Letters are full of references that bear out the importance of kinship and neighborhood ties that historian David Ballew found in the hill country communities of northwest Mississippi and northeast Alabama. The love of home and kin, the importance of marrying and establishing a family, the nature of the unrelenting work it took to maintain a family in the backwoods, and the myriad details of daily life that Ballew's sources recorded are all reflected in the Familiar Letters.

As literature, the letters are entertaining; they provide an ongoing story about an intriguing cast of characters, many of whom appear again and again.

They are funny and fresh, and the dialect is not burdensome to read, less so for most than reading a Shakespeare play. Finally, they are a window into a time and place that exists only in literature, letters, diaries, and a few remaining folkways.

BETSY HAMILTON'S LEGACY: FROM RENOWN TO OBSCURITY

C. Carroll Hollis suggests that the humor columns appearing in newspapers and literary magazines across the country were popular for several reasons. First, their brevity was suitable for oral performances or for publication as a newspaper article; indeed, many were written with both types of presentation in mind. Second, while readers enjoyed a monthly, weekly, or even daily laugh over a humorous sketch, they read the sketch as part of an entire newspaper or magazine; they were not taking a concentrated dose of any one humorist (175). The Betsy Hamilton sketches are both brief and suitable for oral presentation, as witnessed by the phenomenal success of Idora McClellan Plowman Moore's performances of them. Finally, they appeared in newspapers weekly for the first several years and then less frequently. Readers, exposed periodically, did not tire of the intense hilarity of the sketches. Fans could attend Aunt Betsy's character delineations, leaving them with visual and aural impressions of the characters and their modes of dress, speech, and actions. Modern day storyteller Kathryn Tucker Windham's performances leave listeners with a distinct impression; it is difficult to read her stories afterwards without hearing the cadence and pitch of her voice in the printed words. How much more powerful an impression would have been

made by Moore, costumed and performing her sketches in a faithful reproduction of the characters' dialects.

The sketches are "mock oral tales," that is, "reproductions in print of yarns told in the vernacular," in the same way that old Southwest humor's tales are (Blair 64). Betsy Hamilton's letters, as well as the later sketches, reproduce informal, chatty expositions. Readers can easily imagine a twentieth-century Betsy calling Saleny or Flurridy on her cell phone and passing on the news from Hillabee in exactly the same vernacular and style the sketches use.

As old Southwest humor has roots in the oral storytelling tradition, so do Moore's sketches. Moore began writing to entertain her friends, and her stories were read aloud. Although the majority of her sketches reached their audience only through print, a number of them were performed in a combination of reading and acting that gave audiences the best of the oral tradition along with a strong visual component since Moore was costumed in character and was reportedly skilled at reproducing the cracker and Negro dialects she wrote. However, unlike old Southwest humorists who "wanted to laugh at the earthy life around [them]" but "did not want to be identified with it" (Cohen and Dillingham xxx), Moore clearly identified herself with the life she wrote about. She did not just write about her characters or just tell her characters' stories to live audiences; she became the characters both through her pseudonym and physically through her performances.

Dialect humorists "packed theaters and grossed tens of thousands of dollars" with readings and performances (Jones 1). Sophisticated audiences could watch a dramatic presentation of a story about a rural, black, or otherwise foreign

set of characters—with the author sometimes in costume—without having to work through the difficulties and complexities of written dialect for themselves. The dramatic readings and the speech were easier and, depending on the skills of the performer, often funnier than the written stories. Moore was, from all accounts, an exceptionally skillful actress. Newspaper accounts often compared her to Joseph Jefferson, a noted nineteenth-century character actor who was famous nationwide for his representation of Rip Van Winkle (Betsy Hamilton Performance). An 1883 fan letter from a Memphis attorney asks on behalf of his wife, who is "mushed" for her, for a picture of the author and reports that "when the Sunny South arrives, there is a jubilee at our house. Every child, servant—and all—congregate in the living room to hear your letters read" (Goodloe). The Sunny South both built up and capitalized on her popularity; one of its many contests for readers, this one in January 1883, rewarded the "most complete list of words contained in the name, 'Betsy Hamilton.'" First prize was five dollars and a picture of Betsy, second prize was a year's subscription to the paper and a picture of Betsy, and third prize was just the picture ("Prize").

The popularity of local color writing was waning toward the end of the nineteenth century, and realism was gaining popularity. The editor of Harper's Monthly wrote in 1896 that "'we do not hear much now of 'local color'; [. . .] so much color was produced that the market broke down'" (qtd. in Campbell 50). The focus on style—stock characters, heavy dialect, and detailed descriptions of settings—eventually paled with readers who were looking for something else, and stories of adventure and romance took over.

The decline in popularity of Moore's stories even as early as the 1890s and her almost total obscurity in the twentieth century can be attributed first to the nature of what she wrote and when she wrote it; second, to the fact that she published only one collection of sketches, and that book was a small run of only a thousand copies; and third, to the fact that her popularity was based at least as much on performance of her work as on the sketches themselves: "Her recitations were in rich verbal pictures, which cannot be reproduced in cold type; they depend for much of their enjoyable value on that feature of lingual expression which defies the printer's art" (Dalrymple). Her stories were popular when they were current in the newspapers, but they were not collected in a volume until long after the local color and old Southwest humor genres had fallen out of favor, and even then only a few of the sketches were included. Without books to cull them from, editors of anthologists have not had easy to access her stories. With a very few exceptions, Moore's work was published exclusively in regional newspapers. She was proud of her two publications in Harper's Weekly but never broke into national weeklies or monthlies, very likely because of the strong strain of old Southwest humor in her sketches. The straightforward, often crude, treatment of topics was bolder than the genteel tradition followed by the major New York and Philadelphia publications allowed. Betsy's family and friends drink and fight without repentance, and their romantic endeavors are certainly not portrayed in a platonic light.

Further limiting anthologists' access to the full range of Moore's material, the author was classified as a local colorist despite her now evident place in

literature as an old Southwest humorist. The wealth of humor in the Familiar Letters has been pigeonholed, for anyone who would have been looking for it in the first place, as local color.

With fresh material that appealed to audiences who had never had any contact with the crackers or "darkies" Moore wrote about, other writers gained the popularity that had once been hers. Jane Turner Censer makes a telling observation about characteristics of "successful" nineteenth-century women authors from Virginia and North Carolina: "the amount of writing that they packed into their careers [was key]. Once they began writing, they remained active, retiring from publishing only for short intervals. Only death could still their pens" (217). Then, as now, writers who are driven to write tend to be most successful in the endeavor. Moore, who wrote first as a "diversion" and to entertain friends, apparently had little inner drive to translate her ideas into writing or to put forward moral or religious ideals. She needed to support herself, and a more altruistic aim in writing, at least by the time she published her book, was to preserve a dialect and a way of life that were passing out of existence. She did continue to perform until a few months before her death; perhaps her creative drive translated her ideas more readily through the stage than through writing the material for the stage.

Censer points out that for authors after the Civil War, "the easiest way to become a published author was to be 'discovered' and acquire a literary godparent who opened the necessary doors. Mentorship in the late nineteenth century was [. . .] essential for success, especially for women" (231). Moore was discovered and

mentored, first by Mary E. Bryan and the Sunny South and then by Henry Grady and the Atlanta Constitution. Unfortunately, Bryan was unable or unwilling to help Moore get published, and no other mentor who could (or would) give her entrée to publishers in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia appeared despite her fame as a delineator of the characters she had created and her efforts over the years to interest readers for those publishing house in her sketches.

Finally, southern women's writing was generally discounted as unimportant, even by the "southern intelligentsia" (Censer 236). If works that are now considered successful from a literary standpoint were ignored by contemporary critics, mere sketches that were not even collected in their day by their own author were ignored even more completely. Women who were financially successful, Hawthorne's famous "scribblers," at least had the satisfaction of knowing their books that sold in the hundreds of thousands were popular with readers if not with critics. Moore, whose book sold far fewer than a thousand copies, did not have even that literary consolation.

Although Moore continued appearing at "entertainments" almost until her death, her appearances became fewer as she aged and as audiences sought other entertainers whose work was less reminiscent of the past. She faithfully recorded the speech and daily life of two minority groups, neither of which today is subject to romantic views as they were during Betsy's heyday: crackers and blacks. Crackers, however, have continued as humorous subject matter through the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. Comic strips like "Snuffy Smith" and redneck standup comics like Jeff Foxworthy are still popular. Authors such as

William Faulkner, Ellen Glasgow, and Fred Chappell are heirs of old Southwest humor although heavy dialect literature is out of fashion.

Moore's legacy for twenty-first century readers is three-fold. First, she stands, as Kathryn Burgess McKee states, as one of a few nineteenth-century women who transcended their traditional label as local colorists and co-opted the style, if not the subject matter, of old Southwest humorists. Women were not labeled as humorists until well into the twentieth century, but readers now can easily recognize that strong element of Moore's sketches, which range from quiet humor to comic irony to full-out slapstick comedy—old Southwest humor from a woman's perspective that includes the traditional topics: political meetings, camp meetings and sermons, races, frolics and dances, tricksters, violence, and rubes vs. city folk, courtship and weddings, gambling, drinking, and local eccentric characters (Cohen and Dillingham xxiv). Moore may be, in fact, the only woman who was truly an old Southwest humorist.

Second, with their focus on the daily lives of backwoods women, Moore's sketches illustrate the importance of those women to the community. Kathryn Burgess McKee sees the Familiar Letters as a "critique" of postbellum society; the humor was a "guide" and an "instrument" for commenting on the lives of the men and women living in particular time and place—through the lens of a perceptive woman (McKee Writing 23).

Finally, with a relative paucity of primary sources from the backwoods, the sketches' fidelity to their models provides a picture of the daily life and loves of a central Alabama cracker settlement. While the sketches are literary, not

historical, documents, they nevertheless provide a window into the time and place Moore wrote about. McKee's assessment is particularly specific: "The social, political, and racial consciousness reflected in Moore's fiction lends it additional significance; Betsy's letters offer a unique literary photograph of a postbellum culture in transition between worlds" (Writing 74).

AFTERWORD

"Let Betsy Hamilton have the right of way everywhere. She will make people happier and better."

Bishop Fitzgerald, Southern Methodist Church, 1894

Idora McClellan Plowman Moore's legacy has not yet been thoroughly examined. Much work remains to be done to put this author's life and writing in the context of nineteenth century women's, local color, and humorous writing. Several lines of research suggest themselves. The Familiar Letters follow the eighteenth-century tradition of epistolary novels. From 1881 to 1884, the Familiar Letters tell Betsy's story, from her courtship with George Washington Higgins to their marriage, the birth of their children, and the beginning of Betsy's life after George dies. The story line is both interesting on its own, particularly to the author's primary audience, women, and has parallels with her own home life: She was courted by a dashing young man, married, and was widowed at thirty-four. Publication of the Familiar Letters series in a single collection, perhaps with commentary, would allow reading the entire story from beginning to end.

Aside from Betsy and George's story, the theme of romance runs consistently through the Familiar Letters. Few of the sketches in that series are without some reference to developing romances, couples experiencing difficulties with their relationship, and happy endings with weddings or unhappy ending with

thwarted love, difficult marriages, or even domestic violence. This theme presents ample opportunity for analysis.

Kathryn Burgess McKee suggests that the Familiar Letters have a voice, a persona, that is fresher and livelier than that of Moore's later sketches, which abandon the letter format and seem to McKee to be flat in comparison (Writing 102-104). The later sketches are quasi-epistolary, but in most of them at least, Betsy is still the reporter of doings in Hillabee and the other places she visits. Perhaps the lack of the Familiar Letters' specific story line affects the later sketches. The stylistic and thematic similarities and differences between the earlier and later sketches are aspects of Moore's writing that could be researched in greater detail. In addition, close examination of all Moore's sketches is needed to determine which of them are partially or wholly reworked material from earlier sketches rather than fresh material.

Moore adapted only some of her sketches for performance. Analysis of those pieces from a dramatic and literary standpoint might prove rewarding, particularly if scripts for the performances could be found. McKee suggests that Moore edited her performances for live family audiences, deleting the crude humor and other elements that might not be as acceptable in person as in her writing. A newspaper article mentioned in 1900 that Moore had recorded a portion of one sketch—"Ketchin' de Chicken"—on a phonograph and had planned to record the entire sketch "Notes"). Confirming and finding recordings would also throw further light on the nature of her performances.

The history of Moore's personal and literary life still has significant gaps. What did she do during the two years she spent in Texas following Albert Plowman's death? When did she write the bulk of her sketches—during the 1870s or after she began publishing regularly in 1881? Did she publish in any local or regional newspapers or magazines on an occasional basis before 1881? Her success with "Betsy's First Trip to Town" in 1873 suggests that the time was right for doing so. Did she publish anywhere besides the Atlanta Constitution and the Sunny South after 1881? One piece is known to have been published in Werner's Magazine in 1895; were there others?

The pieces in Southern Character Sketches seem to be those that stand alone well, and many are ones that Moore had great success in performing on the stage. However, one current criticism of the book is that the collection is disjointed and shows none of the homely but intriguing story lines that develop across the Familiar Letters. Why she chose those sketches and why she waited so long to publish a collection when other local color writers and humorists were capitalizing on their writing at the height of their success are mysteries.

Some of Idora McClellan Plowman Moore's papers are at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, along with Martin Van Buren Moore's papers, donated by his daughter Julia Moore Smith. Idora Moore's papers include clippings of publicity notices and reviews of some of her performances, a few letters, and clippings of most of her Sunny South columns. Most of the publicity and review clippings are not identified with dates or locations, and the letters are not particularly informative about Moore's life and work. The clippings of her

Sunny South columns are edited in pencil; investigation into whether Moore or her stepdaughter Julia, who inherited Moore's papers, made the edits and for what purpose might reveal more about how Moore worked. The collection includes a handwritten biographical sketch written by one of Moore's stepdaughters—unfortunately unnamed. The first half is a general and slightly sentimental overview of her career, but the second half was apparently dictated by Moore since it is written in the first person and goes into some detail on a few points. The collection also includes a few typewritten manuscripts that have been edited. These could be compared to published versions of the sketches, again for insight into how Moore worked.

Julia Moore Smith may have inherited other papers at her stepmother's death. Moore had numerous siblings, cousins, nephews, nieces, and friends and would have carried on a substantial correspondence with them, and her business dealings with the Sunny South, Atlanta Constitution, Harper's Weekly, and Werner's Magazine would have generated letters. Perhaps Moore kept the manuscripts for her published sketches; perhaps she kept discarded sketches that did not make it into print. Locating family members and, with luck, Moore's remaining correspondence and other papers would be a worthwhile endeavor.

Why spend time on any of these lines of research for an author who does not even appear in anthologies of local color writers, humorists, women authors, southern literature, or nineteenth-century literature? Exhumed from library rare book rooms, microfilm cabinets, and historic newspaper and magazine databases, a substantial portion of Moore's work appears fresh and lively in the twenty-first

century. She wrote funny, poignant stories about real people living in a time and place that are long past. The stories are universal, though, and the characters memorable. They deserve another reading.

APPENDIX A

TOWARD A LIST OF REWORKED AND REPUBLISHED SKETCHES

18 June 1881 "The Sermon." The Sunny South.

30 June 1895 "Big Meetin' at Three Forks." The Atlanta Constitution.

20 July 1895 "Big Meetin' at Three Forks." The Sunny South.

16 Jan. 1916 "'Go to the Ant.'" The Atlanta Constitution.

25 June 1881 "About Borrowing Neighbors." The Sunny South.

30 Mar. 1884 "The Dialogue Between Old Mrs. Green and Old Mrs. Freshours [. . .]." The Atlanta Constitution.

14 Mar. 1886 "Borrowing Neighbors." The Atlanta Constitution.

12 Dec. 1897 "Borrowing Neighbors, or a Dialogue Between Old Mrs. Green and Old Mrs. Freshours." The Atlanta Constitution.

21 Nov. 1915 "Borrowing Neighbors." The Atlanta Constitution.

23 July 1881 "Two Little Darkeys Catching a Chicken." The Sunny South.

26 Mar. 1916 "'Ketchin' a Chicken.'" The Atlanta Constitution.

23 July 1881 "About Miss Roberson's Quilting and Arminty Pendergrass." The Sunny South.

2 Feb. 1884 "The Quiltin' at Old Mrs. Robertson's." Harper's Weekly.

29 Oct. 1881 "About Malindy's Wedding—and Brother Cole's Sermon—'Little Isaac.'" The Sunny South.

8 Mar. 1885 "'Little Isaac.'" The Atlanta Constitution.

12 Jan. 1884 "The Big Meetin' at Swingin' Limb." Harper's Weekly.

17 Nov. 1885 "She Tells of the Big Meeting at Swinging Limb." The Atlanta Constitution.

9 Jan. 1916 "The Big Meetin' at Swingin' Limb." The Atlanta Constitution.

21 Jan. 1882 "'Pap' Gits Drunk in Atlanty and We Git Benighted Gwine Home." The Sunny South.

28 Jan. 1882 "About Old Mrs. Coggins and Her Children." The Sunny South.

10 Aug. 1884 "Betsy Says the Thunder and Lightning [. . .] Made Sleep Scarce at Old Miss Raincrow's." The Atlanta Constitution.

28 Feb. 1886 "Betsy in a Storm." The Atlanta Constitution.

28 Nov. 1915 "Betsy in a Storm." The Atlanta Constitution.

16 June 1883 "Betsy Hires a 'Nigger.' The Sunny South.

7 Nov. 1886 "Bad, Black 'Babe.'" The Atlanta Constitution.

30 Apr. 1916 "'Babe.'" The Atlanta Constitution.

20 July 1884 "'I Must Tell You About We'uns all a Gwine to the Union Camp Ground [. . .],'" The Atlanta Constitution.

3 Sep. 1899 "Recalls an Old Campmeeting Time in the Hillbee Settlement." The Atlanta Constitution.

13 July 1884 "Crops Was All Laid By and It wasn't Hard for the New Writin' Marster to Git Up a Class [. . .]." The Atlanta Constitution.

14 Apr. 1895 "The Writing at the School." The Atlanta Constitution.

12 Dec. 1915 "The Writing School." The Atlanta Constitution.

27 July 1884 "Betsy Says Everyone and Everything Was Plentiful at the Union Campmeeting [. . .]." The Atlanta Constitution.

14 July 1895 "Sister Patience Potter at the Old-Time Camp Meeting." The Atlanta Constitution.

30 Jan. 1916 "The Old-Time Camp Meeting." The Atlanta Constitution.

7 Sep. 1884 "Betsy and Her 'Maw' Go to the Cross Roads Store." The Atlanta Constitution.

5 Mar. 1916 "The Cross Roads Store." The Atlanta Constitution.

12 Sep. 1886 "Tells How the Earthquake 'Shuck' 'Em Up." The Atlanta Constitution.

10 Sep. 1899 "Talks of the Time When the Earthquake Shook Hillabee." The Atlanta Constitution.

2 Dec. 1894 "An Alabama Backwoods Wedding." The Atlanta Constitution.

July 1895 "A Georgia Wedding." Werner's Magazine.

30 Dec. 1894 "Christmas in Hillabee—The S'prise Party at Hun Tucker's." The Atlanta Constitution.

19 Dec. 1915 "The Surprise at Hun Tucker's." The Atlanta Constitution.

10 Feb. 1895 "Hog Killing at Aunt Betsy's." The Atlanta Constitution.

5 Dec. 1915 "Hog Killing in Hillabee." The Atlanta Constitution.

10 Mar. 1895 "A Wartime Commencement in Dixie." The Atlanta Constitution.

1 June 1895 "A Wartime Commencement in Dixie." The Sunny South.

5 May 1895 "Mis' PInkney's Spring Spell." The Atlanta Constitution.

25 May 1895 "Mis' Pinkney's Spring Spell [. . .]." The Sunny South.

20 Feb. 1916 Mrs. Pinkney's 'Spring Spell.'" The Atlanta Constitution.

19 May 1895 "'Huldy.'" The Atlanta Constitution.

9 Apr. 1916 "'Huldy.'" The Atlanta Constitution.

3 May 1896 "'Old Daddy Mose' on Evolution. The Atlanta Constitution.

23 Apr. 1916 "'Daddy Mose' on Evolution. The Atlanta Constitution.

29 Jan. 1899 "Zeke Scroggins, the Embarrassed Lover." The Atlanta Constitution.

23 Jan. 1916 "Zeke Scroggins, the Embarrassed Lover." The Atlanta Constitution.

CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BETSY HAMILTON AND EBONY CRAYONS SKETCHES

The sketches were published under the pseudonym Betsy Hamilton.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny, Showing How Reports are Circulated. No. 1." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 14 May 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny, About Her Trip to Town. No. 2." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 21 May 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny, About Her Trip to Anniston. No. 3." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 28 May 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny, About Her Influenzy and Old Miss Green. No. 4." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 4 June 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny, About the Wedding. No. 5." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 11 June 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. The Sermon. No. 6." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 18 June 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny About Borrowing Neighbors. No. 7." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 25 June 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. A Visit From George Washington Higgins—'And We are Besot on all Sides.' No. 8." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 2 July 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. The Writing School. No. 9." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 9 July 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. About the Comet and the end of the World. No. 10." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 16 July 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. About Miss Roberson's Quilting and Arminty Pendergrass. No. 11. " The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 23 July 1881: 5.

"Ebony Crayons. Sketched by Betsy Hamilton. A Scene on a Southern Plantation—Two Little Darkeys Catching a Chicken." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 23 July 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny--About the Simmons Boys--and Old Mrs. Pinkney. No. 12." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 30 July 1881: 5.

"Ebony Crayons. Sketched by Betsy Hamilton. Celie's Opinion of the 'Strikes' Among the Wash-women." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 30 July, 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton goes on a visit to her Cousin Saleny.—Her Soliloquy. No. 13." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 6 Aug. 1881: 5.

"Ebony Crayons. Sketched by Betsy Hamilton. The Queen of Spades Taces [sic] the Trick." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 6 Aug. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Sister—About Her Visit to Saleney [sic] Sidebottom." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 13 Aug. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters No. 15. Betsy Hamilton to her Sister, Flurridy Tennysy—About the Dinner and the Girl That Got Mad. No. [14]." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 20 Aug. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—About Her Return Home. No. 16." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 27 Aug. 1881: 5.

"Ebony Crayons. Sketched by Betsy Hamilton. The Siesta—Interrupted by Two Little Darkies." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 27 Aug. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—About Her Return Home. No. 17." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 3 Sep. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—About Mrs. Gooden's Sick Baby, and George Washington Higgins Going Away. No. 18." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 10 Sep. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—'No Body'll Never do no Better'n to Git Him.' No. 19." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 24 Sep. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. The Reconciliation. No. 20." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 1 Oct. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. Pap's Sick and Maw's Mad. No. 21." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 8 Oct. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny About the Gypsies and the Rumors of Weddings. No. 22." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 22 Oct. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny About Malindy's Wedding--and Brother Cole's Sermon—'Little Isaac.' No. 23." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 29 Oct. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny About the Wedding Postponed and the Fair at Talledega [sic]. No. 23 [sic]." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 5 Nov. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—Caladony, Betsy and George Washington Higgins Are Going to the Exposition. No. 25." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 12 Nov. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—Before and After Starting to the Exposition. No. 26." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 19 Nov. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—Betsy at the Exposition. First Day. No. 27." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 3 Dec. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—Betsy at the Exposition. No. 28." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 10 Dec. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny--Betsy at the Exposition.—Continued. No. 29." The Sunny South 17 Dec. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—Betsy at the Exposition—She Is Afraid 'Pap' Will Come. No. 30." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 24 Dec. 1881: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny—Betsy at the Exposition—'Pap' did Come. No. 31." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 14 Jan. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny 'Pap' Gits Drunk in Atlanty, and We Git Benighted Gwine Home. No. 32." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 21 Jan. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. About Old Mrs. Coggins and Her Children. No. 33." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 28 Jan. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny About Christmas Frolics and Hannah Strong's Wedding. No. 34." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 4 Feb. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. 'Maw's been Sick, Ever Sense She Dried Up the Hog Fat.' No. 35." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 18 Feb. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny Wonders will Never Cease. No. 36." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 25 Feb. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. 'Hit ain't got no love in it,' says I. No. 38 [sic]." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 4 Mar. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny 'I know in Reason George must er Writ.' No. 39 [sic]." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 11 Mar. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. 'I Slipt Inside er the Spring 'ouse and Shot to the Door.' No. 39." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 18 Mar. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. 'I Stooped and Picked Up the Letter.' No. 40." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 25 Mar. 1882: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny 'Here I Fix My Choice.' No. 40 [sic]." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 1 Apr. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny About Her Trip to Her Grandmother. No. 42." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 8 Apr. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny About Her Trip to Her Grandmother, Continued. No. 43." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 15 Apr. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny They riz and Fetched a Yell Like a Passel of Indians. No. 44." The Sunny South[Atlanta, GA] 22 Apr. 1882: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. Her Trip to her Grandmother's Concluded. No. 54 [sic]." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 29 Apr. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny Says I, 'Look a Thar, Cal!' No. 46." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 6 May 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. About the Fishing Party at Alligator Bend. No. 47." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 13 May 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. 'What You Doing Here all by Yourself.' No. 48." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 20 May 1882: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. Lize Monroe Put Flurridy Up to It. No. 49." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 27 May 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny 'What Does Ignoramus Mean?' No. 50." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 3 June 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. 'But Every Way I Turned I Thought About Flurridy.' No. 51." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 10 June 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. 'Hit Looks Like Hit Mought Rain.' No. 52." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 17 June 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. No. 53." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 1 July 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. 'George Washington is Monstrous Handy.' No. 54." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 8 July 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. 'I Seed Caladony [sic] Looked Like She Had Sumpen On Her Mind.' No. 55." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 15 July 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. A Night at Miss Livingston's. Gets Acquainted with 'Kit.' No. 56." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 22 July 1882: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to "Dixie" of the Southern Household." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 29 July 1882: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. Gen. O'Neal at Chandler Springs. No. 57." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 5 Aug. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. Comments on Gitteau. Signs and Dreams. No. 58." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 12 Aug. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. 'What Do You Mean?' says I. No. 59." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 26 Aug. 1882: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. George 'Peared to be Mad. No. 60." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 2 Sep. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. Weddings—The Foot Race. No. 61." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 9 Sep. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. Betsy In Atlanta. No. 62." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 23 Sep. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. Betsy in Atlanta, The Fashions. No. 63." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 30 Sep. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. Betsy in Atlanta—Seein and Larnin. No. 64." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 7 Oct. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. Betsy in Atlanta—She Goes to See 'That Ugly Woman.' No. 65." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 14 Oct. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. Clem's Children and the Mixed Picture. No. 66." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 21 Oct. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. Betsey [sic] in Atlanta—Things Worth Seeing. No. 67." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 28 Oct. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to her Cousin Saleny. Betsey [sic] in Atlanta—George, He Wasn't No Ways Tickled. No. 68." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 4 Nov. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny--Betsy Home Again—Jinsy Whetlock. No. 69." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 11 Nov. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—Jinsy's Jolly Ride--Camping Out. No. 70." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 18 Nov. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—Jinsy's Jolly Ride that Wasn't so Jolly. No. 71." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 25 Nov. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—Old Mrs. Green's Infallible Remedy. No. 72." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 2 Dec. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—Jinsy Convalescent--Old Miss Green is Invited to Dine. No. 73." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 9 Dec. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny--A Letter from Her Sister Flurridy Tennysy in Texas. No. 74." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 16 Dec. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny Comments on the Rich and Poor--Helen Whetlock's Visit—Buddy's Letter. No. 75." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 23 Dec. 1882: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. Christmas Frolics. No. 76." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 13 Jan. 1883: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. Tom Davis' Letter. Arminty in Trouble. Jinsy Attempts to Organize a Sunday School. No. 77." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 20 Jan. 1883: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. 'Do You Believe in White Horses?' Says Jinsy. No. 78." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 27 Jan. 1883: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny, Betsy's Christmas Presents and Jinsy's Beaux. No. 79." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 3 Feb. 1883: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny Pap's Cane-tucky Mule and George's Dutchman. No. 81." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 17 Feb. 1883: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. No. 82." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 24 Feb. 1883: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—Jinsy's Letter—Cordeely's Visit. No. 83." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 3 Mar. 1883: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—Buddy's Valentine. No. 84." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 10 Mar. 1883: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—The Fiftieth White Horse. No. 85." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 17 Mar. 1883: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—Gossipers of Piney Grove. No. 86." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 24 Mar. 1883: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—George Wins and Loses Again. No. 87." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 31 Mar. 1883: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—Miss Cordeely's Surprise—The Snipe Hunt and the April Fool. No. 88." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 7 Apr. 1883: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny—Bitter Pills—Jinsy Reorganizes Her Sunday School. No. 89." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 14 Apr. 1883: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. No. 90. Interesting News to All." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 21 Apr. 1883: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. More About Jinsey. No. 91." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 28 Apr. 1883: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. As a Nurse, George Washington is not a Success—Jinsy and Old Miss Simmons. No. 92." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 5 May 1883: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. The Twins—Their Presents, Their Names, Etc. No. 93." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 12 May 1883: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Mountain Scenery—Rough Outlines, Sketched." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 19 May 1883: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. Picnic at Stone Mountain. No. 95." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 26 May 1883: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Saleny Sidebottom to Her Cousin Betsy Hamilton. The New Railroad—Its Effect on the Country and the People, Etc. No. 96." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 2 June 1883: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. The Babies Are All (The) Cry—George is Routed and Put to Flight. No. 97." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 9 June 1883: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. Betsy Hires a 'Nigger.' No. 98." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 16 June 1883: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. Gossips Busy Again—The Barbecue—The Nigger and the Babies. No. 99." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 23 June 1883: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. More About the Barbecue. No. 100." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 30 June 1883: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. The Famous Artesian Well at Livingston, Alabama. No. 101." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 14 July 1883: 2.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. Betsy's Gang on the Dirt Road. No. 102." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 28 July 1883: 2.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. Betsy in Mississippi. No. 103." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 4 Aug. 1883: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. The Exhibition. No. 104." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 11 Aug. 1883: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. Babe's Marriage License. No. 105." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 18 Aug. 1883: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. Betsy at Home Again. Rehearses Old School-Days—George is Sick. No. 106." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 13 Oct. 1883: 8.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Caledony Hamilton to Saleny Sidebottom. George Washington Dead. No. 107." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 10 Nov. 1883: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. Everything and Everybody Misses George. No. 108." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 22 Dec. 1883: 5.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. Everything and Everybody Misses George. No. 109." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 12 Jan. 1884: 8.

"The Big Meetin' at Swingin' Limb." Harper's Weekly 12 Jan. 1884: 28.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Betsy Hamilton to Her Cousin Saleny. Arrival at Novyskoshy, etc. No. 110." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 26 Jan. 1884: 8.

"The Quiltin' at Old Mrs. Robertson's." Harper's Weekly 2 Feb. 1884: 79-80.

"Betsy Hamilton's Letters. 'Aunt Mahaly's Candy Pullin'.'" The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 3 Feb. 1884: 2.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Saleny Sidebottom to Betsy Hamilton. Shoulderbone Settlement, Blue Jeens Deestrict, North Georgy." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 9 Feb. 1884: 8.

"Betsy Hamilton's Letters. 'The Quiltin' at Miss Gooden's.'" The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 10 Feb. 1884: 2.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Saleny Sidebottom to Betsy Hamilton. Shoulderbone Settlement, Blue Jeens Deestrict, North Georgy." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 16 Feb. 1884: 8.

"Betsy Hamilton's Letters. III. The Log Rolling." The Atlanta Constitution[Atlanta, GA] 17 Feb. 1884: 2.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Saleny Sidebottom to Betsy Hamilton. Shoulderbone Settlement, Blue Jeens Deestrict, North Georgy." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 23 Feb. 1884: 8.

"Betsy Hamilton's Letter [sic]. IV. Half Hour Before Preachin'." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 24 Feb. 1884: 2.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Saleny Sidebottom to Betsy Hamilton. Shoulderbone Settlement, Blue Jeens Deestrict, North Georgy." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 1 Mar. 1884: 8.

"Betsy Hamilton's Letters. V. 'In Time of Meetin'.'" The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 2 Mar. 1884: 2.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Saleny Sidebottom to Betsy Hamilton. Shoulderbone Settlement, Blue Jeens Deestrict, North Georgy." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 8 Mar. 1884: 5.

"Betsy Hamilton's Letters. VI. Sunday Evenin' at Our House." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 9 Mar. 1884: 2.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Saleny Sidebottom to Betsy Hamilton. Shoulderbone Settlement, Blue Jeens Deestrict, North Georgy." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 15 Mar. 1884: 5.

"Betsy Hamilton's Letter [sic]. VII. Camping Out." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 16 Mar. 1884: 14.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Saleny Sidebottom to Betsy Hamilton. Shoulderbone Settlement, Blue Jeens Deestrict, North Georgy." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 22 Mar. 1884: 5.

"Betsey [sic] Hamilton. The Dialect of Fifty Years Ago Retold. How Betsey [sic] and the Galls [sic] Went to Town and Ate Ginger Cakes on the Doorstep—Going Around to the Stores to See the Sights—The Getting Out of Town, Etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 23 Mar. 1884: 2.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Saleny Sidebottom to Betsy Hamilton. Shoulderbone Settlement, Blue Jeens Deestrict, North Georgy." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 29 Mar. 1884: 5.

"Betsy Hamilton. The Dialect of Fifty Years Ago Retold. The Dialogue Between Old Mrs. Green and Old Mrs. Freshours—Old Mrs. Freshours Thanks Her Stars That Them Simmons' Boys Is Gwine to Move Out'n Her Settlement." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 30 Mar. 1884: 2.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Saleny Sidebottom to Betsy Hamilton. Shoulderbone Settlement, Blue Jeens Deestrict, North Georgy. No. 8 [sic]." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 5 Apr. 1884: 8.

"Betsy Hamilton. The Dialect of Fifty Years Ago Retold. Pa Says, 'Ef it Takes the Last Bottom Dollar, I'm Gwine Give Betsy a Little Book Larnin'—Betsy Tells of Her School Days—Old 'Ingun Head.'" The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 6 Apr. 1884: 11.

"Betsey [sic] Hamilton. The Dialect of Fifty Years Ago Retold. Betsy Continues the Experiences of Her School Days and Says She Would Rather Take a Whipping Than go to Old Ingun Head—She Creates a Panic With a Bug, Etc., Etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 13 Apr. 1884: 2.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Saleny Sidebottom to Betsy Hamilton. Shoulderbone Settlement, Blue Jeens Deestrict, North Georgy. No. 10." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 19 Apr. 1884: 8.

"Betsy Hamilton. The Dialect of Fifty Years Ago Retold. Old Miss Green Doctors the Sick, Which Causes Betsy to Think a Great Many of Her Patients Will

Go to Her When They Die—Too Much Company and Tobacco." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 20 Apr. 1884: 11.

"Betsy Hamilton. The Dialect of Fifty Years Ago Retold. Betsy is Attacked With the In'ard Fever." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 27 Apr. 1884: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. The Dialect of Fifty Years Ago Retold. Tom Davis Tells Betsy She is Pretty and Sweet; Betsy 'Set an' Listened,' He Then Asked Her How She Would Like to Be Mrs. Davis; To This Betsy Said, 'No!' Etc., Etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 4 May 1884: 2.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Saleny Sidebottom to Betsy Hamilton. Shoulderbone Settlement, Blue Jeens Deestrict, North Georgy. No. 11." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 10 May 1884: 8.

"Betsy Hamilton. The Dialect of Fifty Years Ago Retold. A Dark Cloud Causes Flurridy Tennysy to Get Scared, and She Raises the Trap Door and Falls Into a Barrel of Soft Soap in the Cyclone Pit." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 11 May 1884: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. The Dialect of Fifty Years Ago Retold. Betsy Tells of the Marriage of Huck Simpson and Zilphy Ann Dewberry—Mol Freshours Wanted Huck, but She Was Too Slow—A Big Picnic at Owl Hollow, Near Possum Valley." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 18 May 1884: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. The Dialect of Fifty Years Ago Retold. 'If You Want to Hear It All, and More Too, Just go to Piney Grove to a Two-Days' Meeting,

When They Take Dinner and Set About Under the Trees and Dip Snuff.'" The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 25 May 1884: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. The Dialect of Fifty Years Ago Retold. Betsy Tells Her Dear Cousin How the Settlement Women Would Talk Out in Meetin'—She Also Relates Her Experience With Her Pap When He Came Home Drunk." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 1 June 1884: 11.

"The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Saleny Sidebottom to Betsy Hamilton. Shoulderbone Settlement, Blue Jeens Deestrict, North Georgy. No. 12." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 7 June 1884: 8.

"Betsy Hamilton. The Dialect of Fifty Years Ago Retold. Betsy's and Caledony's Trip." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 8 June 1884: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. The Time Was a Drawin' Nigh for the Examination, and Them as Had Chillun at School Was Mighty Consarned About How They Was a Gwine Show To Off." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 15 June 1884: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. The Dialect of Fifty Years Ago Retold. 'I Know in Reason We'uns Has Got Some as Good Neighbors as Ever Borrid a Gourd of Salt or Swapt a Settin' of Aigs,' Is What Betsy Talks About This Week." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 22 June 1884: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. It Had Been Whispered Around that Jake Loftis Had Flirted Malindy Jane Trotman, and Was a Hitchin' of His Ridin' Nag Up at Our House, Etc., Etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 29 June 1884: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. 'Thar is a Time In Eveybody's Life When They Are Crazy; Leastways They Gits Beyant Theyselves,' Says Uncle Hezekiah—Walking Matches, Crazy Quilts." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 6 July 1884: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Crops Was All Laid By and It Wasn't Hard for the New Writin' Marster to Git Up a Class; the Young Folks All Jined Mostly for the Fun of Gittin' Together, Etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 13 July 1884: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. 'I Must Tell You About We'uns all a Gwine to the Union Camp Ground Here Tother Week, and What Happened to Caledony While We was Thar,' Says Betsy." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 20 July 1884: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Betsy Says Everybody and Everything was Plentiful at the Union Campmeeting; Fried Chicken and Preachers Especially—Old Brother Cole Gets After the Sinners, Etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 27 July 1884: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Betsy's Gang Gets Lost and Spends a Night at Old Miss Raincrow's—Caledony Sleeps on the Pallet With the Children and Gets Into Trouble With the Old Woman." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 3 Aug. 1884: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Betsy Says the Thunder and Lightning, Bedbugs and Mosquitos, Crying Children and the

Quarreling Old Woman Made Sleep Scarce at Old Miss Raincrow's." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 10 Aug. 1884: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. It is Apple Peeling Time With Betsy's Folks and They Make a Frolic of It—She Tells What They Talked About While They Sat and Dried the Apples, Etc., Etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 24 Aug. 1884: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Betsy and Her 'Maw' Go to the Cross Roads Store—The Boys Play Marbles, and Get Into a Fight—Pap says, 'It Takes a Heap of Kind of Folks to Make a World.'" The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 7 Sep. 1884: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Betsy's Folks Have New Cornmeal at Their House, and They Are Eating the Bread of Contentment—'Pap' Wants a Machine Invented for Pulling Fodder, Etc., Etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 14 Sep. 1884: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Old Miss Green and Old Miss Freshours, the Neighborhood Prattlers, Meet at Betsy's [illegible] House and Tell All They Know About the Singletons—Jealously, Etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 28 Sep. 1884: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Betsy Tells How Her Brother Had His Cotton Picked Without Much Expense—Sammy Gooden Scares the Old Women With a Snake—Muscadine Hunting, Etc., Etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 5 Oct. 1884: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Candy Pulling." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 12 Oct. 1884: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. A Romance of Owl Hollow—The Sun Was a Sinking on Tother Side of the River, and its Yaller Light Had Settled on Big Tater Mountin—Tobe Millinge"s Old Rifle. Part I." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 19 Oct. 1884: 3.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. A Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part III." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 2 Nov. 1884: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. A Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part IV." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 9 Nov. 1884: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. A Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part V." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 16 Nov. 1884: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. A Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part VI." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 23 Nov. 1884: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. A Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part VII." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 30 Nov. 1884: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part VIII." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 7 Dec. 1884: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part IX." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 14 Dec. 1884: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part X." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 21 Dec. 1884: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part XI." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 28 Dec. 1884: 3.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part XII." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 4 Jan. 1885: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part XIII." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 11 Jan. 1885: 4.

"No. 21. The Backwoods. Familiar Letters. Saleny Sidebottom to Betsy Hamilton." The Sunny South [Atlanta, GA] 17 Jan. 1885: 8.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part XIV." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 18 Jan. 1885: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part XV." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 25 Jan. 1885: 5.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part XVI." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 1 Feb. 1885: 10.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part XVII." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 8 Feb. 1885: 12.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part XVIII." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 15 Feb. 1885: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. Romance of Owl Hollow—A Continued Story in Dialect of Love and Humor. Part XIX." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 22 Feb. 1885: 2.

"'Little Isaac.' By Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods Told in Dialect." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 8 Mar. 1885: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. Spring Gossip—Life in the Backwoods Told in Dialect." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 15 Mar. 1885: 12.

"Betsy Hamilton. Home Chat—Gardening, Etc., in the Backwoods, Told in Dialect." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 22 Mar. 1885: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods—Topics of the Settlement, Told in Dialect." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 5 Apr. 1885: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. Ignorance Abroad, or Betsy and Her Gang at the World's Exposition." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 26 Apr. 1885: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. Betsy at the New Orleans Exposition—What She Saw and Heard." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 3 May 1885: 4.

"Home from Texas. Betsy Hamilton Returns to the Old Red Hills. What She Thinks About the Land of the Horned Frogs and Tarantulas." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 12 Oct. 1885: 1.

"Betsy in Texas. Adventures of the Hamilton Family. After Visiting the New Orleans Exposition They Visit the Lone Star State—They Get Acquainted With the Black Family—Betsy Tells of Traveling Difficulties." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 18 Oct. 1885: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. Her Likes and Dislikes of the Lone Star State. She Says Texas is a Good State for Men and Dogs but a Mighty Poor One for Women and Hogs—A Good Country for Money and Crops—One Honest Negro in the West." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 25 Oct. 1885: 3.

"Betsy Hamilton. She Tells What She Did and Saw in Texas. The Troubles and Tribulations of Aunt Betsy and Her Friends in the Lone Star State—Searching for Kinsfolk, and What Came of It—A Visit to the City of Fort Worth." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 1 Nov. 1885: 3.

"Betsy Hamilton. Relates Some Experience of Her Travels. She Tells How Two Brothers Went to Texas to Grow Up With the State—One Gets Rich While the Other Remains Poor—Squire Hamilton on the Prohibition Question." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 8 Nov. 1885: 3.

"Betsy Hamilton. She Tells of the Big Meeting at Swinging Limb. Betsy, Her Maw, Pap, Buddy, Sister and Cousin Saleny Visit Their Grandmaw, Who Lives in the Coosy Valley—They Make the Trip in an Ox Cart—Other Sayings." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 17 Nov. 1885: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. A Sketch of Life in the Backwoods. The Signs of the Superstitious—Betsy Picks Up a Pin Point Foremost and Receives a Present—The Effect of Prohibition in the Country—Talking of the Coming Holidays." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 29 Nov. 1885: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. The Frolics of Christmas Set In. Betsy Has Been to One, and Has Invitations to Several More—The Quiltings and Candy Pullings—The Hashers and Their Pumpkins—Scenes in Rural Life, Etc., Etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, GA] 20 Dec. 1885: 4.

"Betsy's Blizzard. How the Old Girl Kept Warm During the Freeze. Betsy Relates Her Experience With the Cold Spell—Consulting the Almanac—Putting the Blame on Poor [illegible], Who Misses as Often as He Hits—Life in the Backwoods." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 7 Feb. 1886: 4.

"Betsy in a Storm. The Fearful Experiences of a Night. The Family on Their Return from the Circus Are Overtaken by a Storm and Seek Shelter at Mrs. Raincrow's—Caledonia's Rough Treatment—Other Notes, Etc., Etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 28 Feb. 1886: 2.

"Borrowing Neighbors. Sketches and Scenes of Olden Times. A Dialogue Between Old Mrs. Green and Old Mrs. Freshours—Old Mrs. Freshours's

Cabin Spinning Wheel—Washtub on a Bench—Scrubbing Board—Bathing Stick." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 14 Mar. 1886: 6.

"Betsy Hamilton. She and Her Cousin Pink Visit Mississippi, Where They Have a Good Time Hating Turkey, Visiting Relatives and Seeing the Country—They Visit the A. and M. College, Where the Boys Learn to Make a Living, etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 9 May 1886: 14B.

"Betsy Hamilton. Visits Whitepath, and Tells What She Saw at That Place." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 20 June 1886: 7.

"Betsy Hamilton. Tells of Her Trip from Atlanta to Alabama. The Curious People She Met on the Train—The Preparations that She, Cal and Pink Make Before Leaving—They Buy a Speckled Brown Apiece, which Makes Them Uppish." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 5 July 1886: 1.

"Betsy Hamilton. Tells How the Earthquake 'Shuck' 'Em Up. The People Gather to the 'Cross Roads' Store and Discuss the 'Yethquake,' and Swap Experiences—Some Thought 'Jedge-ment' Day Had Arrived—Betsy's Thoughts." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 12 Sep. 1886: 14.

"Betsy Hamilton. On a 'Muskydine' Hunt and Courting Expedition. How the Boys of the Neighborhood Get Up Little Private Excursions to Go on the Coosa River to Hunt 'Muskydines' and to Court—How Mol Freshours Was Dressed." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 3 Oct. 1886: 2.

"Betsy's Boy Beau. Merry Maidens Making Mashes Muscadining. Curious Country Courting—Junior Jake's Jealousy—Fishing for Fun—Coosa's Channel Comfortably Crowded—'Pa's' Passive Pillow Plays a Part—

Many Matches Made." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 10 Oct. 1886: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. Long Looked For Rain Comes at Last. [illegible] and a Cold, Chilly Rain Come [illegible], and the [illegible] Calls on the [illegible]—Betsy and Cousin Pink Have a Good Time Frolicking, Etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 31 Oct. 1866: 13.

"Bad, Black 'Babe.' Begins Business by Burning Betsy's Best Basque. Besides Burning Betsy's Best Basque, Babe Burns Betsy's Biscuit—Besides Burning Betsy's Biscuit, Babe Borrows Betsy's Breastpin—Babe Bounced Before Breakfast." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 7 Nov. 1886: 13.

"Snowed In; But 'Betsy's' Neighbors Call to Snow-Ball, And Things Take a Lively Turn—Cousin Pink Makes a Hasty Toilet, But Cupid's Blindness is Opportune—Pap's Prognostications Proves a 'Stitch in Time'—hog-Killing, Etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 19 Dec. 1886: 14.

"Betsy and the Gals. Eating a Snow Man With Sugar and Cream. A Discourse on Christmas and the Christmas Tree—Betsy Goes a Shopping She Visits the Big Stores on Whitehall Street and Sees the People Come and Go Through the City." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 2 Jan. 1887: 10.

"Perusing the Picture. Betsy Hamilton and Her Pa Read Harper's Weekly. And Pronounces the Cut of Mr. Grady Not at al [sic] Like Him—Pa's Description of Him When a Boy—The Hamilton Family Willing to Vote

for Mr. Grady for President." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 17 Jan. 1887: 5.

"Betsy Hamilton. Preparing to Go to Texas—The Boom in Talledega [sic]." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 13 Mar. 1887: 16.

"Betsy Hamilton. Disappointment in Making an Intended Visit. She and Cousin Pink Wish to Show Off Their Big Cloaks—The Bad Luck that Attaches to Friday—Old Mrs. Freshours Indulges in Some Lively Talk—An Interesting Letter." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 10 Apr. 1887: 13.

"Betsy Hamilton. Continues the Story of Her Trip to Texas. Why Cousin Pink Blushed—Curious People Whom They Met on the Train—The Wonders of Birmingham and Neighborhood—They Arrive Safe and Sound at Dallas, Texas." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 17 Apr. 1887: 14.

"Betsy Hamilton. Gets Back from Texas and is Given a Taffy Pullin'. A Big Time at the School House. Mr. Turnipseed, Cap Dewberry, Jackson Gates and All the Boys and Girls Come to See Them." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 4 Sep. 1887: 3.

"Denizens of Dallas. Portrayed by Betsy Hamilton, Late from Texas. The Heathen Chinee and His Queue. How They Dress and Talk—The Mexican and His Hot Tamales—The Italian and the Indian, Too." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 11 Sep. 1887: 14.

"Betsy Hamilton." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 2 Oct. 1887: 4.

"Betsy Sees the Sights. She Visits the Piedmont Exposition and Tells What She Saw." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 16 Oct. 1887: 10.

"Betsy at the Fair. The Crowds Strolling About in the Rain. Scenes During the Great Crush. Fancy Feathers and Silk Dresses Ruined by the Rain—What Betsy Saw and How It Impressed Her." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 23 Oct. 1887: 5.

"Old-Time Candy Pullings. The Dissipation of Country Young People. Our Grandfathers and Grandmas May Look Back and Enjoy the Frolics of Their Youth." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 10 Mar. 1889: 2.

"Piecing the Preacher's Quilt. The Women of Piney Grove Hard at Work. Some Observations About Preachers, Politics and Crops—Planting When the Moon Fulls." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 17 Mar. 1889: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 27 Oct. 1889: 17.

"Betsy Hamilton." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 3 Nov. 1889: 19.

"Family Pride. Parts I and II." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 13 Apr. 1890: 6.

"Betsy Hamilton. An Old Favorite Returns After a Long Absence. An Alabama Backwoods Wedding. An Interesting Chapter of Cracker Life Which Will Be Appreciated by Our Readers." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 2 Dec. 1894: 11.

"Betsy Hamilton. Christmas in Hillabee—The S'prise Party at Hun Tucker's." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 30 Dec. 1894: 5.

"Hog Killing at Aunt Betsy's. Her Paw Takes Advantage of the Cold Weather to Get Some Fresh Meat." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 10 Feb. 1895: 24.

"The Writing at the School." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 14 Apr. 1895: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. Mis' Pinkney's Spring Spell. How the Sick Are Attended in Betsy's Neighborhood—Garden Talk, Etc." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 5 May 1895: 5.

"Betsy Hamilton. 'Huldy;' An Ebony Crayon Sketch." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 19 May 1895: 25.

"Betsy Hamilton. Mis' Pinkney's Spring Spell—How the Sick are Attended In Betsy's Neighborhood—Garden Talk, etc." The Sunny South [Atlanta, Ga.] 25 May 1895: 11.

"Big Meetin' at Three Forks." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 30 June 1895: 22.

"A Georgia Wedding." Werner's Magazine July 1895: 521.

"Betsy Hamilton. Sister Patience Potter at the Old-Time Camp Meeting." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 14 July 1895: 22.

"Big Meetin' at Three Forks." The Sunny South [Atlanta, Ga.] 20 July 1895: 11.

"Betsy Hamilton. Sister Patience Potter at the Old-Time Camp Meeting." The Sunny South [Atlanta, Ga.] 27 July 1895: 11.

"Betsy Hamilton. 'Nicey,' An Ebony Crayon Sketch." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 1 Sep. 1895: 5.

"Betsy Hamilton. 'Dat Quarter,' An Ebony Crayon Sketch." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 22 Sep. 1895: 4.

"Betsy Hamilton. 'Nicey,' An Ebony Crayon Sketch." The Sunny South [Atlanta, Ga.] 28 Sep. 1895: 3.

"Betsy Hamilton. 'Dat Quarter,' An Ebony Crayon Sketch." The Sunny South [Atlanta, Ga.] 5 Oct. 1895: 12.

"Betsy at the Exposition." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 20 Sep. 1895: 5.

"Betsy Hamilton. At the Exposition." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 8 Dec. 1895: 30.

"'Old Daddy Mose.' By Betsy Hamilton." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 3 May 1896: 2.

"Betsy Hamilton. Borrowing Neighbors; or, a Dialogue Between Old Mrs. Green and Old Mrs. Freshours." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 12 Dec. 1897: A24F.

"Aunt Kizzie's Experience in Her Liberian Home." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 4 Dec. 1898: 17.

"Betsy Hamilton. Zeke Scroggins, the Embarrassed Lover. An Incident of the Piney Woods." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 29 Jan. 1899: 12.

"Betsy Hamilton. Recalls an Old Campmeeting Time in the Hillabee Settlement." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 3 Sep. 1899: A3.

"Betsy Hamilton. Talks of the Time When the Earthquake Shook Hillabee." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 10 Sep. 1899: B6.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No. 1—Borrowing Neighbors." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 21 Nov. 1915: B14C.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No. 2—Betsy in a Storm." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 28 Nov. 1915: 22.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No. 3—Hog Killing in Hillabee." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 5 Dec. 1915: D8.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No. 4—The Writing School." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 12 Dec. 1915: C9.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No. 5—The Surprise at Hun Tucker's." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 19 Dec. 1915: B19.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No. 7—Pap's Bone Felon." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 2 Jan. 1916: E7.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No. 8—The Big Meetin' at Swingin' Limb." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 9 Jan. 1916: D7.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No. 9—'Go to the Ant.'" The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 16 Jan. 1916: E7.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No. 10—Zeke Scroggins, the Embarrassed Lover." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 23 Jan. 1916: E6.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No. 11—The Old-Time Camp Meeting." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 30 Jan. 1916: E3.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No. 12—Them Chil'en of Nance's." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 6 Feb. 1916: B5.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No,. 13—The Valentine Party." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 13 Feb. 1916: E6.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No. 14—Mrs. Pinkney's 'Spring Spell.'" The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 20 Feb. 1916: E5.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No. 15—The Old Ingon Head's School." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 27 Feb. 1916: B7.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No. 15 [sic]—The Cross Roads Store." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 5 Mar. 1916: 6.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part II. The Old-Time Plantation Negroes. No. 1—Superstitions of the Alabama Negro." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 12 Mar. 1916: D6.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part II. The Old-Time Plantation Negroes. NO. 3 [sic]—'Ketchin' a Chicken.'" The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 26 Mar. 1916: D7.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part II. The Old-Time Plantation Negroes. No. 3—Aunt Neely's First Love." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 2 Apr. 1916: D7.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part II. The Old-Time Plantation Negroes. No. 4—'Huldy.'" The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 9 Apr. 1916: D3.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part II. The Old-Time Plantation Negroes. 'Daddy Mose' on Evolution." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 23 Apr. 1916: B6.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part II. The Old-Time Plantation Negroes. 'Babe.'" The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 30 Apr. 1916: E6.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part I. The Hill Country and Backwoods People of the South. No. 16—The Dollar Baptist; or, Why Sol Quit Drinking." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 7 May 1916: A6.

"Betsy Hamilton. Part II. The Old-Time Plantation Negroes. No. 7—'Daddy Mose' on Darkness." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 14 May 1916: A6.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PUBLICATIONS OTHER THAN BETSY HAMILTON SKETCHES

Some of the articles and the 1937 edition of the book are published under the pseudonym Betsy Hamilton. Some of the articles published under the author's own name are attributed to Idora M. Moore and some to Idora McClellan Moore.

Hamilton, Betsy. "A Question of Interest in Literature." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 6 Oct. 1895: 29.

---. Southern Character Sketches. Richmond: Dietz, 1937.

---. "A Wartime Commencement in Dixie." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 10 Mar. 1895: 2.

---. "A Wartime Commencement in Dixie. Graduating in Homespun Dresses." The Sunny South [Atlanta, Ga.] 1 June 1895: 7.

Moore, Idora M.. Betsy Hamilton: Southern Character Sketches. Atlanta, GA: Dickert, 1921.

---. "Betsy Hamilton. Studies in a Waiting-Room—The Little Bundle in a Crocheted Shawl." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 6 Aug. 1899: 16.

---. "Betsy Hamilton on Dolls: A Famous Dollmaker." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 13 Mar. 1898: 22.

---. "Plan for Cotton Factory Building in Small Towns." The Atlanta Constitution [Atlanta, Ga.] 4 Feb. 1902: 6.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

[Advertisement]. Talladega Reporter 14 June 1865: 3.

"American Dialect." The Literary World; a Monthly Review of Current Literature (1870-1904) 23 July 1887: 233. APS Online. ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 21 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com>.

Ammons, Elizabeth, and Valerie Rohy, eds. American Local Color Writing, 1880-1920. New York: Penguin, 1998.

"Among the Georgia Crackers." The Independent . . . Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Econ . . . 8 Jul. 1875: 15. APS Online. ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 21 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

Anderson, Michael. "Talladega Was Site of Early Womans [sic] College." Newsletter [Talladega County Historical Association] 240 (Oct. 1992): n. pag.

Andrews, E. F. "Woman's Council Table: Cracker English." The Chautauquan; A Weekly Newsmagazine (1880-1914) 1 Apr. 1896: 85-88. APS Online. ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 21 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

Arp, Bill. "Aunt Betsy's Show. Arp Is Delighted With the Performance. Good Old Times Recalled. The Spinning Wheel Scene Causes the Philosopher to Mediate." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 20 May 1888, 8. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 18 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

[Article]. Alabama Reporter 22 Oct. 1863: 1.

"Auburn. Death of Col. M. V. Moore—Buried in His Confederate Uniform." The Montgomery Advertiser 4 Sep. 1900, 3.

Ballew, David Edwin, Jr. The Popular Prejudices of Our People: Kinship, Community, and Male Honor in the Alabama-Mississippi Hill Country, 1820-1890. Diss. U of Mississippi. 2000. Ann Arbor: UMI, 2001. 3002008.

Betsy Hamilton Performance. Advertisement Trenton Opera House broadsheet, 4 May 1894, folder 1, Idora McClellan Moore Papers #3072, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, U of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"Betsy Hamilton." Anonymous ms., n.d., folder 1, Idora McClellan Moore Papers #3072, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, U of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"The 'Betsy Hamilton' ." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 17 Mar. 1885, 5. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution, (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 17 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com>.

"Betsy Hamilton, Authoress, Dies." The Atlanta Constitution 27 Feb. 1929, 1+.

"Betsy Hamilton: A Very Pleasant Reception to a Well Known Literary Woman." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 19 Nov. 1882, 11. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution, (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 17 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com>.

Blackford, Randolph F. Fascinating Talladega County: Rich in History and Legends. Talladega: n.p., n.d.

Blair, Walter. "Humor of the Old Southwest." The Frontier Humorists: Critical Views. Ed. M. Thomas Inge. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1975. 45-82.

Boatwright, Eleanor Miot. Status of Women in Georgia, 1783-1860. Scholarship in Women's History: Rediscovered and New. Brooklyn, NY: Carlson, 1994.

"Book Reviews in Tabloid: 'Betsy Hamilton.' Betsy Hamilton: Southern Character Sketches, by Idora McClellan Moore. Atlanta, GA: Dickert, 1921." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 25 Sep. 1921, d1. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 18 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

Brewer, William H. "A Horse-Swapping Convention." Cosmopolitan Oct. 1899: 581-584.

Bussel, Alan. "The Sunny South: A Gilded Age Publishing Phenomenon." [Address] History Division, Association for Education in Journalism. Fort Collins, CO. 21 Aug. 1973.

Campbell, Donna M. Resisting Regionalism: Gender and Naturalism in American Fiction, 1885-1915. Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1997.

Cane, Aleta Feinsod, and Susan Alves, eds. "The Only Efficient Instrument": American Women Writers & the Periodical, 1837-1916. Iowa City, IA: U of Iowa P, 2001.

Censer, Jane Turner. The Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood 1865-1895. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State UP, 2003.

"Centenary College. Summerfield, Ala." Alabama Reporter 1 Oct. 1863: 2.

"Centenary Female College, Summerfield, Ala." Talladega Reporter 9 Aug. 1866: 2.

"City News. Broke His Leg. Candy Pulling. A Helpless Family. Sons of Veterans. Office Removal. For the Railroad. Damage Suit. Filed Mortgages. Permanent Receiver." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 18 Jan. 1894, 5. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 21 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

"Classified Ad 2 -- No Title." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 13 Sep. 1885, 4. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 17 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

"Classified Ad 6 -- No Title." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 28 Aug. 1874, 3. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 17 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

"Classified Ad 8 -- No Title." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 25 Jul. 1894, 10. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 17 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

"The Clay Eaters." Scientific American (1845-1908) LXXVI, No. 10 (6 Mar. 1897): 150. APS Online. ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 21 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

Cocke, Zitella. "Life Among the Crackers." The Brooklyn Magazine 4:4 (July 1886): 145-53.

Cohen, Hennig, and William B. Dillingham, eds. Humor of the Old Southwest. 3rd ed. Athens, GA: U of Georgia P, 1994.

"Copperas." The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, Vol. I. 1971.

Cory, Chappell. Introduction. Sketches of Country Life: Humor, Wisdom and Pathos from the "Sage of Rocky Creek." The Homely Life of the Alabama Back County has Its Sunny Side: Rough But Wise and Kindly Folk. Selections from the Writings of Francis Lloyd Bartow ("Rufus Sanders"). Francis Bartow Lloyd. Birmingham, AL: P of Roberts & Son, 1898. 7-10.

"Cracker." Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. 11th ed. 2004.

Cyganowski, Carol Klimick. Magazine Editors and Professional Authors in Nineteenth-Century America: The Genteel Tradition and the American Dream. New York: Garland, 1988.

Dalrymple, Dolly. "Betsy Hamilton Memorial to Be Reality." Newspaper clipping in Idora McClellan Moore Papers, U of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

de Graffenreid, Clare. "The Georgia Cracker in the Cotton Mills. Century 41:4 (Feb. 1891): 483-498,

"The Diary of a Pioneer: Leaves from a Journal Throwing Valuable Light on Atlanta's Early History. An Interesting Statement. Something of the Pioneer Who Was Present at Atlanta's Birth. Leaves from Dr. White's Journal." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.]2 Feb. 1896, 4. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 18 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

Dike, Donald A. "Notes on Local Color and Its Relation to Realism." College English 14:2 (Nov. 1952): 81-88. 19 Jul7 2007 <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0100-0994%28195211%2914%3A2%3C81%ANOLACA1%3E2.0.CO%3B2-G>.

Donovan, Josephine. New England Local Color Literature: A Woman's Tradition. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1983.

"Editor Seals and His Work." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 2 Apr. 1892, 4. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution

(1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 17 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

Ellison, Rhoda Coleman. Early Alabama Publications: A Study in Literary Interests. University, AL: U of Alabama P, 1947.

Eppes, William D. "Betsy Hamilton (Idora McClellan Moore) 1843-1929." Newsletter [Talladega County Historical Association] 122 (Dec. 1982): 12-14.

Flynt, Wayne. Foreword. You Always Think of Home: A Portrait of Clay County, Alabama. By Pamela Grundy. Athens, GA: U of Georgia P, 1991. vii-xiv.

---. Poor But Proud: Alabama's Poor Whites. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 1989.

Foote, Stephanie. Regional Fictions: Culture and Identity in Nineteenth-Century American Literature. Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin P, 2001.

Garner, Margaret Louise Keenan. "Betsy Hamilton of Talladega" (from Historic Homes of Alabama, 1935). Newsletter [Talladega County Historical Association] 240 (Oct. 1992): n. pag.

Garrett, Mitchell B. Horse and Buggy Days on Hatchet Creek. University, AL: U of Alabama P, 1957.

Garrett, William B. Reminiscences of public men in Alabama, for thirty years [microform] / With an appendix. Library of American Civilization LAC 10270. Atlanta, GA: Plantation Pub Co P, 1872.

"Georgia Crackers." The Colonade 6 Mar. 1934: n. pag.

A Georgia Lady. "Home Life in Georgia During the War." Blue & Gray (Feb. 1894): 79-80.

Goodloe, James L. Letter to Idora M. Plowman. 9 Feb. 1883. Idora McClellan Moore Papers. U of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

"Gin House Burned." Alabama Reporter 12 Jan. 1865: 1.

"The Great South." Scribner's Monthly (1870-1881) 1 Aug. 1874: 385. APS Online. ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 21 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

Grundy, Pamela. You Always Think of Home: A Portrait of Clay County, Alabama. Athens, GA: U of Georgia P, 1991.

Hammond, Ralph. Ante-Bellum Mansions of Alabama. New York: Bonanza, n. d.

Harris, George Washington. "Blown Up with Soda." Humor of the Old Southwest. Ed. Hennig Cohen and William B. Dillingham. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1994, 212-217.

Harris, Joel Chandler. "At a West End Window." The Atlanta Constitution 20 Jan. 1884: 2.

Haven, Gilbert. "Georgia Crackers." Zion's Herald (1868-1910) 20 Nov. 1873: 1. APS Online. ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 20 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

Hayne, M. M. to Mrs. Plowman, 7 Feb. 1885, folder 1, Idora McClellan Moore Papers #3072, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, U of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Hollis, C. Carroll. "Rural Humor of the Late Nineteenth Century." The Comic Imagination in American Literature. Ed. Louis D. Rubin, Jr. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1973. 165-77.

Homestead, Melissa J. American Women Authors and Literary Property, 1822-1869. New York: Cambridge UP, 2005.

Hooper, Johnson Jones. "Simon Plays the 'Snatch' Game." Humor of the Old Southwest. Ed. Hennig Cohen and William B. Dillingham. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1994, 255-261.

Howard, Mattie H. "Leisure Moment Jottings." Southern Cultivator (1843-1906) 1 Jul 1890: 339. APS Online. ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 20 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

Hubbell, Jay B. The South in American Literature 1607-1900. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1954.

"Idora McClellan Moore." This Goodly Land. 30 May 2008. Alabama Center for the Book and Auburn University. 12 July 2008 <http://www.alabamaliterarymap.org/author.cfm?AuthorID=17>.

Inge, M. Thomas, ed. The Frontier Humorists: Critical Views. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1975.

Ingersoll, Ernest. "Some Queer Americans." Wide Awake May 1881: 290-294.

Inness, Sherrie A., and Diana Royer, eds. Breaking Boundaries: New Perspectives on Women's Regional Writing. Iowa City, IA: U of Iowa P, 1997.

J. H. "Betsy Hamilton. Betsy the Inimitable, Betsy the Humorous, Betsy the 'Common-sense-ical,' Betsy the Natural." Sunny South [Atlanta] 28 Oct. 1882: 8.

Johnson, Clifton. "Among the Georgia Crackers." Outing (Feb. 1904): 522-533.

Jones, Gavin. Strange Talk: The Politics of Dialect Literature in Gilded Age America. Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1999.

Justus, James H. Fetching the Old Southwest: Humorous Writing from Longstreet to Twain. Columbia, MO: U of Missouri P, 2004.

---. "Introduction." The Humor of the Old South. Ed. M. Thomas Inge and Edward J. Piacentino. Lexington, KY: UP of Kentucky, 2001. 1-10.

"Known by Pen Names." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 26 Sep. 1895, 4. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 21 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com>.

Library of Congress. Copyright Certificate No. 5606 issued to E. I. M. Plowman, 14 Mar. 1884.

"Literary Journalism." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 27 Aug. 1875, 2. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 21 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com>.

Lloyd, Francis Bartow. Sketches of Country Life: Humor, Wisdom and Pathos from the "Sage of Rocky Creek." The Homely Life of the Alabama Back County has Its Sunny Side: Rough But Wise and Kindly Folk. Selections from the Writings of Francis Lloyd Bartow ("Rufus Sanders"). Birmingham, AL: P of Roberts & Son, 1898.

Longstreet, Augustus Baldwin. Georgia scenes, characters, incidents, &c., in the first half century of the republic / by a native Georgian [microform].

Library of American Civilization LAC #12355. Augusta, GA: SR Sentinel Office, 1835.

Lumpkin, Ben Gray. Diversity in the Characters Portrayed in Southern Regional Short Stories of the Nineteenth Century. Diss. U North Carolina, 1944. Chapel Hill, NC: U, 1 of North Carolina, 1944.

Luttrell, Carolyn Lane. "Early Sylacauga History to 1840." Newsletter [Talladega County Historical Association] 144 (Oct. 1984): 6-8.

Martin, Matthew R. "The Two-Faced New South: The Plantation Tales of Thomas Nelson Page and Charles W. Chestnutt." Southern Literary Journal 30:2 (Spring 1998): 17-36. 19 July 2007 <https://aumnicat.aum.edu:2089/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver+0.2&res_id+xr_i:lion-us&rft_id=xri:lion:rec:abell:R01523585>.

McCain, Louise Burke. Idora McClellan Moore: A Biographical Sketch Including Selections of Her Writings. Diss. Alabama Polytechnic Institute, 1934.

McKee, Kathryn. "The Forgotten World of Idora McClellan Moore's 'Betsy Hamilton' Letters." Studies in American Humor 3:10 (2003): 65-72.

---. "Southern Women Humorists." The History of Southern Women's Literature. Eds. Carolyn Perry and Mary Louise Weaks. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State UP, 2001. 176-186.

---. Writing in a Different Direction: Women Authors and the Tradition of Southwestern Humor, 1875-1910. Diss. U of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. 1996. Ann Arbor: UMI, 2001. 9708156.

McLane, Bobbie Jones. The McClellans of Alabama and Arkansas. Fayetteville, AR: Washington County Historical Society, 1962.

Merritt, Katherine P. "When Homespun Was a Virtue, Silk a Sin." Atlanta Journal 4 (Dec. 1932): n. pag.

Miller, Rex. Muster Roll for 51st Alabama Cavalry. Transcribed from National Archives Microfilm. N.p.: n.p., n.d.

Mizzell, Philip G. A History of Sylacauga. Sylacauga, AL: First National Bank of Sylacauga, 1981.

Idora McClellan Moore. Last Will and Testament. Talladega, AL, 29 Oct., 1927.

---. "My Own Log Fire: A Reverie." Unpublished poem, ms., n.d., folder 1, Idora McClellan Moore Papers #3072, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, U of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Moore, Martin V. Typescript, 1899, box 1, folder 1, Martin Van Buren Moore Papers #520, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, U of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"Mr. Hales' Lecture. On the 'Chautauqua Idea,' at Trinity Church. An Interesting Talk to a Large Audience. The Speaker Presented to the Atlanta Chautauqua Circle." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 12 Apr. 1888, 7. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution

(1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 21 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

"New Advertisements. Just Published: Master William Mitten; or A Youth of Brilliant Talents, Who Was Ruined by Bad Luck. By the Author of 'Georgia Scenes.'" Democratic Watchtower 18 May 1864: 3.

"The New Chautauqua. A New Educational Centre of Quick Growth and Great Promise." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 20 Jun. 1885, 3. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 21 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

Noland, Charles F. Cavorting on the Devil's Fork: The Pete Whetstone Letters of C. F. M. Noland. Ed. by Leonard Williams. Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 2006.

"Notes of the Women's Press Association." Montgomery Advertiser 22 Apr. 1900: 15.

"Other 4 -- No Title." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 26 Nov. 1915, 6. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 18 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

Perry, Carolyn, and Mary Louise Weaks. The History of Southern Women's Literature. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State UP, 2001.

Piacentino, Ed, ed. The Enduring Legacy of Old Southwest Humor. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State UP, 2006.

"Plowman House." Newsletter [Talladega County Historical Association] 240 (Oct. 1992): n. pag.

"A Prize Contest. 'Betsy Hamilton'." The Sunny South 13 Jan. 1883: 8.

Pryse, Marjorie. "Origins of American Literary Regionalism: Gender in Irving, Stowe, and Longstreet." Breaking Boundaries: New Perspectives on Women's Regional Writing. Eds. Sherrie A. Innes and Diana Royer. Baton Rouge, Iowa City, IA: U of Iowa P, 1997. 17-37.

"A Question of Interest in Literature." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 6 Oct. 1895, 6. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 18 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

"The Raid." Alabama Reporter 27 Apr. 1865: 1.

Ridgley, J. V. Nineteenth-Century Southern Literature. Lexington, KY: UP of Kentucky, 1980.

Rubin, Louis D., Jr., ed. The Comic Imagination in American Literature. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1973.

Rutherford, Mildred Lewis. "War Time Christmas in the Old South: 'The South of Yesterday'." Miss Rutherford's Historical Notes (Formerly Scrap Book): Miscellaneous and Religious Writers, Christmas Songs and Memories 4:10 (Dec. 1926): 25-30.

Saunders, James Edmonds. Early settlers of Alabama. With notes and genealogies by Elizabeth Saunders Blair Stubbs. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub., 1969.

Seals, John H. Letter to Mrs. Plowman. 22 Jul. 1882. Idora McClellan Moore Papers. University of North Carolina Lib., Chapel Hill.

Skaggs, Merrill Maguire. The Folk of Southern Fiction. Athens, GA: U of Georgia P, 1972.

"Sketch." Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature (1995): n. pag. Literary Resource Center. EBSCO. Auburn University at Montgomery Library, Montgomery, AL. 30 June 2007 <http://aumnicat.aum.edu:2055/login.aspx?direct=tru&db=lfh&AN=17284803&site=lrc-live>.

Skitt [Hardin E. Taliaferro]. Fisher's River (North Carolina) Scenes and Characters. New York: Harper, 1859.

Smith, Julia Moore. "Foreword." Southern Character Sketches by Betsy Hamilton. Richmond, VA: Dietz P, 1937. N pag.

"Social Notes: An Interesting Meeting of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Marriage Of Two Prominent People Both Well Known in the World of Letters--Gossip About People You Know." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 16 Mar. 1892, 7. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 18 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

"Southern Chautauqua. The Committee Meet and Open the Propositions. A Lengthy Discussion Which Ends in the Selection of Monteagle Springs, Tennessee. A Description of the Place Selected. With Its Labors Ended the

Committee Disbands." The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 20 Sep. 1882, 5. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 21 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

"Southern Literary Journal. The Weekly Visitor, Devoted to Choice Literature, Romance, News and Commercial Intelligence." Alabama Reporter 9 Nov. 1865: 2.

Stephens, Mrs. E. A. "Hardships in Talladega During Civil War: If You Are One of Those Guilty of Grumbling at Wartime 'Hardships' Learn What Total War Really Meant." Newsletter [Talladega County Historical Association] 113 (Mar. 1982): 3-7.

The Sunny South 9 Oct. 1886: 1.

"Superstitions of the Alabama Clay Eaters:--N.Y.Times." Current Literature (1888-1912) 1 Aug. 1889: 151. APS Online. ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 21 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

Tandy, Jennette. Crackerbox Philosophers in American Humor and Satire. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat, 1964.

Thomas, Betty Wood. Alabama Records Vol. 23: Talladega County. Compiled by Kathleen Paul Jones and Pauline Jones Gandrud. Columbus, MS: n.p., 1980.

Thompson, William Tappan. Chronicles of Pineville. Philadelphia, PA: Carey & Hart, 1845.

---. Major Jones's Courtship. Philadelphia, PA: T. B. Peterson, 1843.

---. Major Jones's Sketches of Travel. Philadelphia, PA: Carey & Hart, 1848.

"To the Men and Boys of Middle and South Alabama." Alabama Reporter 22 Dec. 1864: 2.

"Town of Waldo." Riddle-L Archives. 15 Sep. 2000. Linda Lane. 1 Aug. 2008 <http://listsearches.rootsweb.com/th/read/RIDDLE/2000-09/0969073149/>.

Turner, Arlin. "Comedy and Reality in Local Color Fiction, 1865-1900." The Comic Imagination in American Literature. Ed. Louis D. Rubin, Jr. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1973. 157-164.

Vandiver, Wellington. "Pioneer Talladega, Its Minutes and Memories." Part I. The Alabama Historical Quarterly 16:1 (Spring 1954): 9-XXX.

---. "Pioneer Talladega, Its Minutes and Memories." Part II. The Alabama Historical Quarterly 16:2 (Summer 1954): XXX-XXX.

Wade, John Donald. "Southern Humor." The Frontier Humorists: Critical Views. Ed. M. Thomas Inge. Hamden, CT: Archon, 1975. 32-44.

Walden, Ada Ramp. "A Southern Cheer Song of the 1860's." Atlanta Journal 6 Jan. 1935: n. pag.

Warfel, Harry R., and G. Harrison Orians, eds. American Local Color Stories. New York: American Book, 1941.

[Wedding Announcement]. Alabama Reporter 19 Nov. 1863: 3.

"Who Is Betsy Hamilton." Rev. of Southern Character Sketches by Idora McClellan Moore. The Atlanta Constitution (1881-2001) [Atlanta, Ga.] 25

Sep. 1921, D1. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Atlanta Constitution (1868 - 1939). ProQuest. University of Georgia Main Library, Athens, GA. 18 Mar. 2008 <http://www.proquest.com/>.

Williams, Benjamin B. "'Betsy Hamilton': Alabama Local Colorist" Alabama Historical Quarterly 26:2 (Summer 1964): 235-39.

Williams, Benjamin Buford. A Literary History of Alabama: The Nineteenth Century. Cranbury, NJ: Associated U Presses, 1979.

Willis, James Wisdom. "Southern Authors: Betsy Hamilton." The Cajoler 1:2 (Nov. 1928): 19-22.