



Trials of the Earth: The True Story of a Pioneer Woman

Mary Mann Hamilton

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The Powerful, Only Known First-Person Account of One Woman's Struggles and Triumphs Taming the Mississippi Delta

Near the end of her life, Mary Mann Hamilton (1866 - c.1936) was encouraged to record her experiences as a female pioneer. The result is the only known firsthand account of a remarkable woman thrust into the center of taming the American South-surviving floods, tornadoes, and fires; facing bears, panthers, and snakes; managing a boardinghouse in Arkansas that was home to an eccentric group of settlers; and running a logging camp in Mississippi that blazed a trail for development in the Mississippi Delta. All this she tackled-and diligently wrote about in secrecy, in a diary that not even her family knew she kept-while caring for her children, several of whom didn't survive the perils of pioneer life. The extreme hard work and tragedy Hamilton faced are eclipsed only by her emotional and physical strength; her unwavering faith in her husband, Frank, a mysterious Englishman; and her tenacious sense of adventure.

An early draft of *Trials of the Earth* was submitted to a writers' competition sponsored by Little, Brown in 1933. It didn't win, and we almost lost the chance to bring this raw, vivid narrative to readers. Eighty-three years later, in partnership with Mary Mann Hamilton's descendants, we're proud to share an irreplaceable piece of American history.

Conveyed in frank and expressive prose by a natural-born writer, and withheld for almost a lifetime, *Trials of the Earth* will resonate with readers of history and fiction alike-an emotional testament to our ability to endure, as well as the story of extraordinary love and the allure of pioneer life.

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