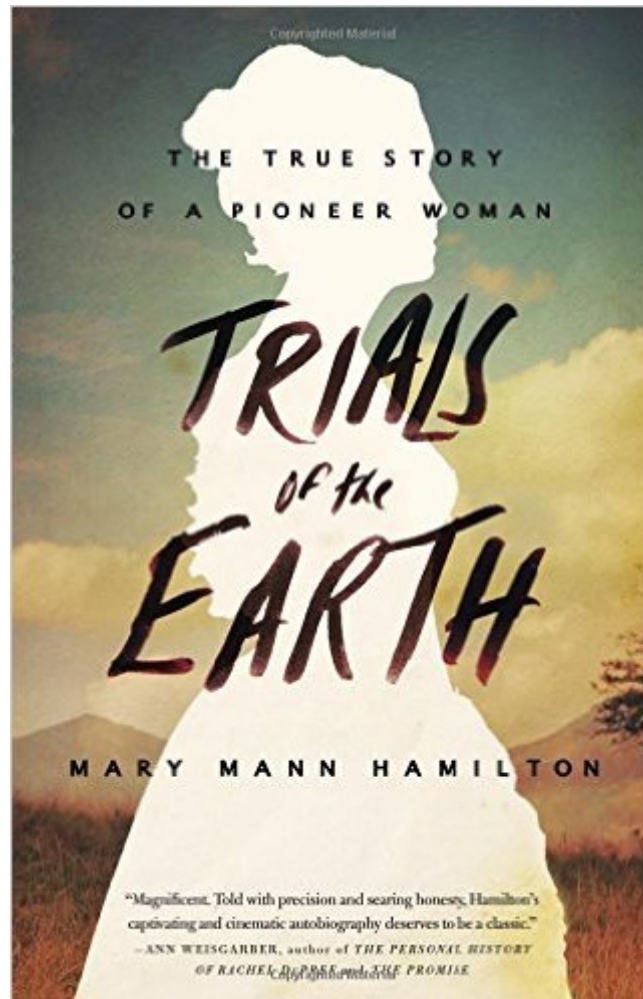


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# Trials Of The Earth: The True Story Of A Pioneer Woman



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

St. Paul says in Second Thessalonians (or as Donald Trump would have it, "Two Thessalonians"), "if any would not work, neither should he eat." This seems old-fashioned, even unfair to some. But not so long ago, what St. Paul said was literally true for most Americans, and merely an accepted fact of life, not an imposition by society. "Trials Of The Earth" is a vivid reminder of that time, and a chronicle of human strength and self-reliance in response. "Trials Of The Earth" is quite similar in the facts of the life it relates to the fictional "Growth of the Soil," by Knut Hamsun, which won him the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1920. That book is about a Norwegian farmer who similarly ground out an existence in a remote and hostile location (and it was unfortunately admired by the Nazis, with their "blood and soil" fixation). This book is not fiction, and does not even seem remotely embellished. We easily forget that this is how millions of people in our own country used to live, unaware, for better or worse, of Pokemon Go. It's nearly impossible to do justice to this book in a summary. You really have to read it to grasp it (and you should). In brief, though, it's a partial autobiography of Mary Mann Hamilton (1866-1937), one of the early settlers of the Mississippi Delta, which was then (around 1890) essentially an untamed jungle-like wilderness. Hamilton, born in Missouri, moved to Arkansas with her mother and father in her mid-teens. There she married a somewhat older Englishman, Frank Hamilton, who worked in what amounted to logging supervision and related money making, such as running boardinghouses. They shortly moved to Mississippi, where they mostly remained. The book is a chronicle of hardship "but that's not the way Mary Hamilton saw it.

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