

# Beth Slater Whitson Remembered

By GRACE THOMPSON

How do we celebrate our country on its two hundredth birthday? Or on any birthday? Or at any time?

We review and live again events and achievements; we point with pride to fellow-Americans who have been outstanding in the attainment of goals, in the development of our nation, and in its cultural growth. As we, the people, struggle for a higher level of civilization, for a plane with a more beautiful view of our world, we honor the talented people who have left to us something worthwhile.

Here, briefly, is a sketch of a Hickman Countian who was one of our brightest and most creative:

## BETH SLATER WHITSON

Beth Slater Whitson, a gifted and outstanding citizen of Hickman County, was born at Goodrich in 1879. She lived in Goodrich till 1913 at which time she moved to Nashville. She died in 1930 and is buried in Spring Hill Cemetery in that city. Her parents were John and Annie Slater Whitson.

Poems by Beth Slater Whitson were published in the leading magazines of her time; some of her short stories were starred in O'Brien's Best Short Stories of the Year; her song lyrics were some of the best of all times in the popular music field. Here two most popular songs were "Meet Me Tonight in Dreamland" and "Let Me Call You Sweetheart." The former was published in 1909; the latter, in 1910.

One of her first songs to become very popular was "Counting the Apple Seed." Some of her friends among the "Old-Timers" may remember hearing the chorus to that song. This was given to me by Kate Leeper who learned it from her mother, Mrs. T. J. Derryberry:

**CHORUS:** One I love, two I love ever the same; Three I love best, they say; Four has my heart, although we must part, and five, I cast away; six I love true, and seven I love too, and eight – 'tis well agreed.....That love for a day is love for always.....Counting the apple seed.

This poem by Beth Slater Whitson was given to me by her sister, Alice Whitson Norton:

## A DISCIPLE OF PAN By BETH SLATER WHITSON

They say, "The mid-wood gods have taken flight, the little people of the snow are gone."  
But I have heard their music in the night – Have seen the fairies dance from dusk 'til dawn.

Still hung with mystery are wood and stream, and marvelous the sunset as of old – The day's slaw waking from its wondrous dream of great white stars – and space – and worlds untold.

The Hickman County Retired Teachers Association of which I happen to be president during part of the Bicentennial Year, planned as a project, a program honoring our country and its flag, and giving recognition to Beth Slater Whitson as one of the county's gifted citizens. Due to illness of committee members, the program was not given. Special recognition, however, should go to Mrs. Marie Love, a music teacher of the county, who featured Beth Slater Whitson in recital during the Bicentennial celebration.

Requests were made in the name of the Retired Teachers Association, of various leaders and officials for help in perpetuating the memory of one of Hickman County's most talented and most creative citizens. The Hickman County Retired Teachers Association takes pride in announcing that our representative in the State Legislature, Mr. Walter Work, has been instrumental in helping secure a historical marker denoting the birthplace of Beth Slater Whitson. We believe this will be a matter of civic pride to all Hickman Countians.

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