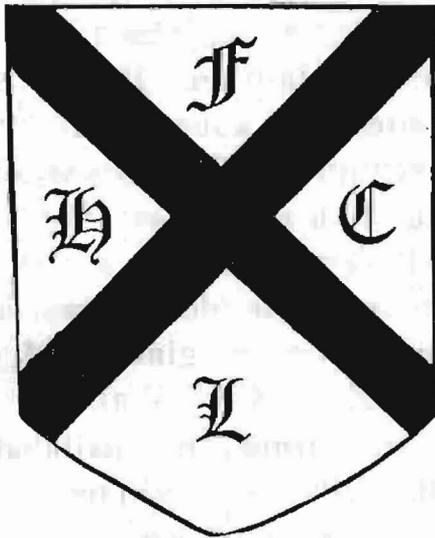


Friends of Houston Cole Library



Alabama Humanities Foundation

Janice Milner Lasseter

**Duels, Feuds, Horse-Racing, Plantation
Mistresses, Slavery, Iron Mills: Alabama
Legends in a Nineteenth-Century Memoir**

November 12, 2002

2:00PM

Houston Cole Library

The folklore of Alabama looms large in the memoir of Rebecca Harding Davis, a popular 19th century fiction writer whose early life was spent in Florence, Alabama. Her life story includes quirky anecdotes about family feuds, chivalric duels, encounters with Indians, slave uprisings, and plantation mistresses. She shows how and why the lives of plantation mistresses were quite different from the picturesque, idle lives their northern sisters imagined and envied. Her portrayal of the Civil War is a personal, unromanticized vision of past national glories where heroes did arise, but so did brutes, or a "class of soldiery who raged like wild beasts through the mountains of the border States." In addition to the Alabama legends in her autobiography, Davis also wrote stories about iron mills and slavery. Davis focuses her life's story and her fiction around the momentous cultural changes through which she lived from the 1830s to the early 20th century, and her characters reveal the importance of individual endeavors in the shaping of any nation's history.

This program is made possible by the Alabama Humanities Foundation (AHF), the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.