

Cobb, Lucy Maria ^[1]

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By Daniel W. Patterson, 1979

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Lucy Maria Cobb, folklore collector, teacher, and author, was born in Lilesville. She was a sister of Collier Cobb and a daughter of Martha Louisa Cobb and [Needham Bryan Cobb](#) ^[2], a Baptist preacher. Lucy Cobb attended [St. Mary's School](#) ^[3], [the State Normal School in Greensboro](#) ^[4], and [Greensboro College for Women](#) ^[5]. She took a B.A. degree in 1921 at [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[6], completed an M.A. in English there in 1927, and studied further at [Peabody College in Nashville](#) ^[7] and [Columbia University](#) ^[8] in New York. She worked variously as [Duplin County](#) ^[9] home demonstration agent, publicity agent for [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[10] and for [Campbell College](#) ^[11], city editor of the [High Point Enterprise](#) ^[12], short-term teacher in both public schools and colleges, and feature writer for North Carolina newspapers.

In the 1920s she developed an interest in collecting folklore. She never did systematic or intensive field work, but her unpublished 106-page master's thesis, "Traditional Ballads and Songs of Eastern North Carolina," was the first sizeable collection of song texts made in the tidewater counties. During the thirties she collaborated with Mary Ann Hicks of Cary on a volume entitled [Animal Tales from the Old North State](#), ^[13] which contains forty-eight stories gathered from seven black informants in [Johnston](#) ^[14], [Wake](#) ^[15], [Wilson](#) ^[16], and [Lenoir](#) ^[17] counties. The two women projected but did not complete another book of tales and one of children's traditional games. Miss Cobb later published several brief articles on folklore. None of these materials was assimilated into the [Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore](#) ^[18], though she also contributed a few items for its pages.

Lucy Cobb also participated in the Carolina folk-drama movement, on which she wrote one article. Her "Gaius and Gaius, Jr." was included in the second volume of *Carolina Folk Plays*. Two other unpublished plays—a comedy with the title "Some Women Are Like That" and another about Blackbeard, entitled "A Gift for Penelope"—received performances. She adapted the latter play as an operetta, "The Pirate and the Governor's Daughter," which was performed in 1956 in Raleigh, with piano score and lyrics by Dorothy Horne and orchestration by Patrick McCarty.

Miss Cobb's later writings concerned family history and genealogy.

Lucy Cobb was also active in the state's cultural organizations. She served as vice-president of the [North Carolina Folklore Society](#) ^[19] and held membership and offices in the North Carolina Society for the Preservation of Antiquities, the North Carolina Art Society, [the National Pen Women](#) ^[20], [the American Association of University Women](#) ^[21], [the Daughters of the American Revolution](#) ^[22], and the [Magna Charta Dames](#) ^[23]. In 1957 the North Carolina Society for the Preservation of Antiquities recognized her work by awarding her its [Charles A. Cannon](#) ^[24] Cup.

References:

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L. M. Cobb and Mary Ann Hicks, *Animal Tales from the Old North State* (1938), and "Proverbs," *North Carolina Folklore* 1 (1948)

William S. Powell, ed., *North Carolina Lives* (1962)

Additional Resources:

Lucy Cobb Papers: http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/c/Cobb,Lucy_M.html ^[25]

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