



2000 Inductee
to the
South Carolina
Academy of Authors

Gwen Bristow was born in Marion, South Carolina, on September 16, 1903. Her interest in writing did not begin until she started to report junior high school events for her local newspaper. After her father became the minister of a Baptist church in Selma, Bristow received much of her education in Alabama. While in high school and through her early years at Judson College in Marion, AL, she also began to write plays; and several of her works were presented at the college.

After graduating from Judson in 1924 with a double major in both English and French, Bristow attended the Pulitzer School of Journalism at Columbia University in New York for a year. She then became a reporter for the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*. Her marriage to Bruce Manning, a reporter for a rival newspaper, encouraged Bristow to write longer works. She published her first book, *The Invisible Host*, with her husband between 1929-1930. The book was inspired by the loud disturbances of one of their neighbors and their comical scheme to murder him.

After she and Manning moved to Hollywood, Bristow achieved national popularity and success with *Plantation Trilogy*, which consisted of the books *Deep Summer* (1937), *The Handsome Road* (1938), and *This Side of Glory* (1940). The trilogy follows two Louisiana families from pre-Revolutionary days to World War I. Her career flourished with the publication of her Western romance novel, *Jubilee Trail*. Set in the nineteenth century, the novel focuses on the adventures of two young, strong women who are venturing across the country while trying to find or maintain both happiness and love on their own terms.

Throughout her lifetime, Bristow wrote over one dozen books, many of which were translated into multiple languages. Several were also made into movies, including the renowned *Jubilee Trail*, *Tomorrow is Forever*, and *The Ninth Guest*, which was based on her novel *The Invisible Host*. Gwen Bristow continued to write books and articles until her death in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1980.

-Sarah Marie Williamson



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Gwen Bristow