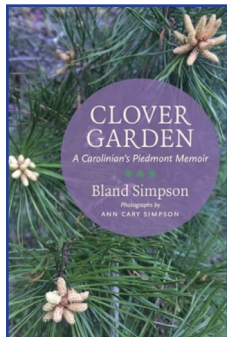


# North Carolina Books

Compiled by Laura Mangum



## *Clover Garden: A Carolinian's Piedmont Memoir*

Bland Simpson with photos by  
Ann Cary Simpson  
Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North  
Carolina Press, 2024.  
182 p. \$26.00  
ISBN: 9781469682891

**B**land Simpson is, among other things, the Kenan Distinguished Professor of English and Creative Writing at UNC-Chapel Hill. He is also a long-time member of the Red Clay Ramblers, one of North Carolina's premier string bands. For most, though, he is a writer. His canon covers fiction, non-fiction, history, mystery, and environmental odes to North Carolina's vast natural resources. For many he embodies North Carolina and has won multiple awards that add to his reputation, including becoming a member of the NC Literary Hall of Fame.

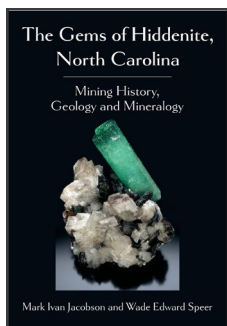
Simpson is known for stories about his upbringing in coastal North Carolina. In his new book, *Clover Garden*, Simpson invites his readers to learn about Clover Garden, a community situated a few miles west of Chapel Hill. Clover Garden is real, and if Simpson is to be believed (as he should be), his neighbors are an entertaining bunch. What makes this memoir really jump off the page is how Simpson turns the natural beauty of his surroundings into the main character. This is not just a memoir, but something that the author calls "a great wonder in my life" (p. 5). In a time of constant movement for many people, Simpson has managed to establish deep roots in Clover Garden. Over the course of the book, we are privy to over fifty years of life and growth on his property. Although to hear Simpson tell it, it took some getting acclimatized to his new home and neighbors throughout the area.

Finding himself ensconced in the wilds between Chapel Hill and Burlington, Simpson set out to make Clover Garden his home. Reading about his journey to improve his home and lands over the following decades brings the reader on an excursion that is nostalgic for many who grew up in rural areas of the state. Simpson does a masterful job retelling the stories of how he negotiated with a surly neighbor over land rights (p. 41) alongside his tales of Bravo's Market being saved from closing during the pandemic by a word-of-mouth campaign to keep the store solvent (p. 58).

*Clover Garden* is full of stories that are intimately familiar to anyone who has grown up in a rural area. From local character Eben Merrit, whose Merrit's Service Station was the spot for local gossip and a great place to get the car fixed, to the town of Saxapahaw, a forgotten mill town that has transformed itself into a thriving arts and culture center that as Simpson writes "the old mill village had become a destination for bicyclists, homeopathic therapy seekers... all in a twenty-first-century version of what the 1970s back to landers could not achieve" (p. 128).

This is a great book for those who are interested in local lore and reminiscing about the "good ole days." It is packed full of the characters and places that make North Carolina an interesting place to call home. Simpson is one of those authors who manages to grab the reader's attention. Although this is primarily marketed toward his long-term fans, readers from high school and college would benefit from Simpson's deft descriptions of his world. Public libraries would do well to purchase this as it has broad appeal to North Carolina residents as well as casual readers of non-fiction and memoirs.

*Lucas Berrini*  
*North Carolina Wesleyan University*



## ***The Gems of Hiddenite, North Carolina: Mining History, Geology and Mineralogy***

Mark I. Jacobson and Wade E. Speer  
Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2021.  
217 pp. \$39.95.  
ISBN: 978-1-4766-8469-7

**H**iddenite, a rare emerald-green gem, is the focus of this work and is considered “the mineralogical claim to fame of Alexander County.” Hiddenite is found only in Alexander County in North Carolina.

George Washington Warren recalled finding “green bolts,” as the local people referred to the gems, while working on his father’s farm. He commented that he “used to chuck some of them pebbles at birds in the fields and used some of ‘em in his sling shots too! Throwin’ thousands of dollars worth of gems at birds! Just like a boy, ain’t it” (p. 14)?

The majority of the book covers mining history in Alexander County, North Carolina, chronologically from the initial gem discovery in 1875 to the present. Additionally, there are sections for Geological Setting, Species Mineralogy, and both a References List and Index. There are gorgeous photographs of minerals interspersed throughout, as well as photographs, sketches, diagrams, and newspaper advertisements that greatly add to the visual appeal. This unique compendium is enjoyable for those casually interested in shiny sparkly rocks and local history, and for those well-versed in geology and mineralogy.

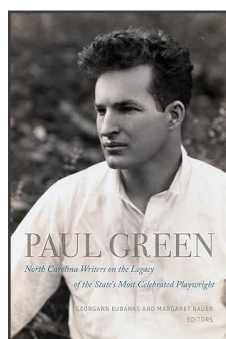
Several prominent miners important to the exploration of the Hiddenite Gem Mines are featured. This is an interesting read including dramatic controversies over naming rights and discoveries, proper attribution, advertisements requesting gemstones found in fields, a fraud lawsuit, assault and murder, and tragic mining fatalities. Pointed barbs were published in the newspaper such as “science is getting too full of unmeaning jargon, born of an inordinate desire of small minds for notoriety” (p. 28).

Collaborating authors Mark Jacobson and Wade Speer both have extensive knowledge and experience in the field of geology and mineralogy. Their expertise enhances the context of the chronology. They have taken great care to compile first-hand accounts,

oral histories, newspaper articles and data and to corroborate the information wherever possible and provide citations. Mark Jacobson has been a consulting editor with *Rocks and Minerals* magazine since 1984 and has written many articles. This is his fourth book and also the fourth book for Wade Speer. Most of the mineral photography included is by nationally and internationally known mineral photographers. They also purposely included historic illustrations and photographs that have not been previously published.

Those without prior knowledge of geology will need to look up some definitions to best understand the jargon used. Novice readers will enjoy learning terms such as breccia, termination face, siderite, pegmatite, rutiled quartz, and hydrothermal vein. Regardless of geological knowledge, readers will be able to understand and appreciate a majority of the work, but those with a background in geology will have a deeper comprehension of the content and the value of this unique work. This book will be a welcome addition to any academic or special library focusing on geology, mineralogy, or North Carolina mining history.

*Amy Cooley*  
*East Carolina University*



## ***Paul Green: North Carolina Writers on the Legacy of the State's Most Celebrated Playwright***

Georgann Eubanks and Margaret Bauer, editors  
Durham, NC: Blair, 2024.  
154 pp. \$19.95.  
ISBN 978195888230

Read in NC LIVE’s HomeGrown Collection

**P**aul Eliot Green (1894 –1981) was a distinguished dramatist and social justice activist. The first Southern playwright to gain national and international recognition, he won the 1927 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *In Abraham’s Bosom*. Green pioneered the symphonic, or outdoor historical drama, with *The Lost Colony* (1937). He collaborated with notable writers such as Richard Wright and wrote scripts for

Hollywood films, including *Cabin in the Cotton* and *State Fair*.

Despite his literary success, Green's work is not widely known today. *Paul Green: North Carolina Writers on the Legacy of the State's Most Celebrated Playwright* seeks to change that. Edited by Margaret Bauer and Georgann Eubanks of the Paul Green Foundation—established in 1982 to continue Green's legacy in the arts and human rights—this anthology aims to spark new discussions rather than serve as a biography.

Growing up on a farm in eastern North Carolina, Green witnessed the racial discrimination and inequity that profoundly shaped his later writing and activism. He used his plays to illuminate the struggles of Black Americans, Native Americans, and other marginalized groups. He was influential in both literary and social advocacy spheres, and championed causes such as the better treatment of Black prisoners and the abolition of the death penalty.

For those unfamiliar with Green's writing, the volume includes his short story "Education South," which portrays the indifference of a white college campus to the funeral of a young Black man and the suffering of his mother. Poet Philip Shabazz reflects on the story's continued relevance today.

In recent years, interest in Green's work has been rekindled, and the anthology's contributors examine this revival. Debra Kaufman discusses her adaptation of *Johnny Johnson*, an antiwar play inspired by Green's World War I experiences, for a twenty-first-century audience.

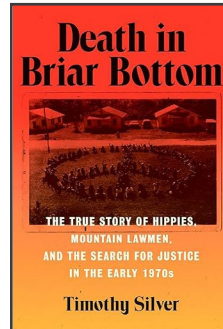
Green's portrayals of racial discrimination are complex. While he was one of the few white writers of his era to address racial and social inequities and prominently feature marginalized communities, contributors such as Kathryn Hunter Williams critique his depiction of Black characters as stereotypical and disempowered. Jim Grimsley reflects on the discomfort of reading these now anachronistic portrayals and highlights the increasingly relevant question of who has the right to tell certain stories.

This illustrated volume features essays and other contributions from North Carolina playwrights, novelists, poets, educators, actors, and activists. Collectively, they explore the impact of Green's writing, how contemporary artists have interpreted his work,

and the ongoing relevance of his efforts to confront injustice. This anthology is a valuable resource for public and academic libraries and will help inspire discussions about Green's legacy.

Linda Jacobson

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



***Death in Briar Bottom: The True Story of Hippies, Mountain Lawmen and the Search for Justice in the Early 1970s***

Timothy Silver  
Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2024.  
208 pp. \$27.00.  
ISBN 978-1-4696-8286-0

Most events from the 1970s have transitioned from memory to a form of nostalgia as time has smoothed and dulled the rough edges of truth. Timothy Silver in *Death in Briar Bottom: The True Story of Hippies, Mountain Lawmen and the Search for Justice in the Early 1970s* uses interviews, newspaper accounts, and legal documents to explore a deadly confrontation between out-of-state hippies and the Yancey County Sheriff department in 1972. A group of twenty-five young Floridians on their way to a Rolling Stones concert in Charlotte made camp at the Briar Bottom Campground in Yancey County. They had been turned away from other camp areas, but were told about Briar Bottom. There they partied, set off fireworks, and were loud and disruptive. Some members who had earlier encounters with local law enforcement convinced the group to tone down their antics. Things were quiet when the police arrived.

Yancey County Sheriff Kermit Banks got a phone call earlier in the evening about the group and gathered six other deputies armed with shotguns to confront the Floridian campers. While the police were gathering the campers, there was a confrontation and a shotgun went off. Stanley Altland, one of the campers, was shot and killed. The campers were arrested for disorderly conduct. Those charges were later dropped for most of the group. No one was charged with the death of Stan Altland. Reports from

the campers and sheriff's office varied on who fired the shot that killed Altland. Banks claimed the campers had attacked him and the men he had with him. Various state and federal agencies never determined who fired the shotgun. Campers claim Sheriff Banks fired the shot. Banks claimed it was another deputy.

Timothy Silver was seventeen the summer Stan Altland was killed. Like the Floridian campers, he was a fan of the Rolling Stones and longed to go to the Charlotte concert, but his parents objected. Like most teens of that era, he questioned the values of the previous generation. Silver explores the collision of values that are exemplified in the confrontation of Altland and his Florida friends with their hippie culture and the values personified by the Yancey County Sheriff's Department. The Florida group confronted authority while Kermit Banks and the Yancey County Sheriff's Department represented it and could not see why others would not respect that authority. Fifty years after Altland's death, culture conflict about respect for authority still exists.

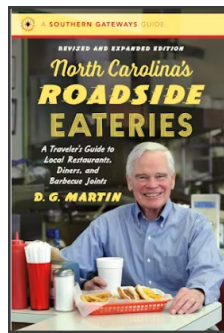
*Death in Briar Bottom* traces the events before and after the shooting of Stan Atland. Interviews, newspaper accounts, official reports, and personal reflections are used to detail the event. The footnotes detailing Silver's research are numerous. However, Silver was unable to persuade some participants, family members, and citizens of Yancey County to speak with him. Silver does use the first chapter to offer a brief personal reflection about the time of the event and an epilogue to discuss the aftermath of Atland's death.

This book is recommended to all libraries that collect items about crimes in North Carolina or the 1970's in North Carolina.

Timothy Silver is a professor emeritus of History at Appalachian State University. Silver has authored *Mount Mitchell and the Black Mountains*, and along with Judkin Browning wrote *An Environmental History of the Civil War*.

Robert Arndt  
UNC Pembroke

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## ***North Carolina's Roadside Eateries: A Traveler's Guide to Local Restaurants, Diners, and Barbecue Joints***

D.G. Martin  
Chapel Hill, NC: University of  
North Carolina Press, 2024.  
188 pp. \$20.00.  
ISBN 978-1-4696-6093-6

Is it possible for readers to be given a tour of roadside eating attractions in North Carolina? Does North Carolina have a variety of restaurants to suit every traveler's needs? In the book, *North Carolina's Roadside Eateries: A Traveler's Guide to Local Restaurants, Diners, and Barbecue Joints*, author D.G. Martin introduces readers to a multitude of interesting restaurants to be found just off Interstate 26, Interstate 40, Interstates 73 & 74, Interstate 77, Interstate 85, and Interstate 95. For those readers unfamiliar with North Carolina barbecue, the author explains the difference between Western-style NC barbecue (vinegar & ketchup-based) versus Eastern-style North Carolina barbecue (strictly vinegar-based). At the beginning of each chapter, which features a North Carolina interstate highway, the author provides a brief description of the interstates and where they crisscross the state.

To gain some perspective into the popularity of each featured restaurant, D.G. Martin interviews the restaurant owners or includes the recommendations of his friends. Some of the restaurants included in the book have colorful names such as the following: *Moose Café* (Interstate 26), *12 Bones Smokehouse* (Interstate 40), *Soprano's Italian Restaurant* (Interstates 73 & 74), *Randy's BBQ* (Interstate 77), *Catfish Cove Seafood* (Interstate 85), and *White Swan Bar-B-Q & Fried Chicken* (Interstate 95).

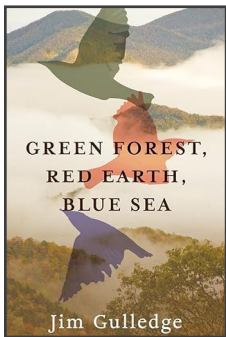
D.G. Martin's book is an interesting work for all North Carolina restaurant enthusiasts as each restaurant is described in terms of local address, contact telephone number, business hours, food choices, directions to the restaurant from the highway, and local area attractions to explore after dining at the specific restaurant. If potential visitors have a GPS system in their cars, the author provides maps in each chapter with a legend placing the number on the map with a specific restaurant. To provide some context for the

popularity of the restaurant, D.G. Martin provides customer feedback and restaurant photos.

*North Carolina's Roadside Eateries: A Traveler's Guide to Local Restaurants, Diners, and Barbecue Joints*, is a revised and expanded edition of the author's original work published in 2016. Before writing *North Carolina's Roadside Eateries*, the author had a varied background, including serving as former host of UNC-TV's *NC Bookwatch* program (1999-2021), practicing law in Charlotte for 20 years, and serving in leadership positions at UNC Pembroke, North Carolina Central University, and the Trust for Public Land.

This book is intended to offer a glimpse into the variety of restaurants available to travelers in North Carolina who want to enjoy good food and conversation away from the busy interstates. Because of its specific scope, *North Carolina's Roadside Eateries: A Traveler's Guide to Local Restaurants, Diners, and Barbecue Joints* would be appropriate for inclusion in any public library or academic library with a focus on North Carolina popular culture.

David W. Young  
University of North Carolina at Pembroke



***Green Forest, Red Earth, Blue Sea***

Jim Gullledge  
Virginia Beach, VA: Koehlerbooks, 2024.  
310pp. \$26.95.  
ISBN 979-8-88824-390-9

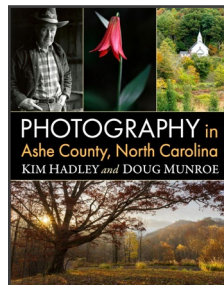
**G**reen Forest, Red, Earth, Blue Sea is Southern fiction at its finest. The book is an expansion of the author's earlier novella, *A Poor Man's Supper*, which comprises the first part of the current novel. Spanning all 3 major areas of North Carolina and multiple generations, it speaks to love lost and found, good and evil, family connections, and the fate of a small pocket watch. The author is a lifelong resident of the Carolinas who taught classes about storytelling (among others) at Pfeiffer University for many years.

The tale begins in the mountains of Saluda in

the late 1800s, when Vancie and Josiah meet and fall in love. It continues with the Elliott family in Peachland, in the Piedmont, after the Great War, and concludes with the McClure family in Beaufort in the 1970s. The characters, from young, carefree Vancie Keller to the rich and evil Dred Mabry, are detailed, beautifully drawn, and incredibly human, extremely relatable (or occasionally, relatably hateable) regardless of time and place. The landscapes are characters unto themselves, with rich descriptions that make you feel like you are there in that time and place. The descriptions of 1800s Saluda in particular are breathtaking and contribute significantly to the story. Relationships are a large focus of the story, and these are compelling and rich – both relationships between family members, lovers, and other people, as well as relationships between people and the land they live on. Gullledge's prose is lovely and draws you in within the first few sentences, not letting go until the final epilogue, and still leaving you wanting more.

Overall, *Green Forest, Red Earth, Blue Sea* is a charming book from a talented author that captures much of the history and geography of North Carolina within an enthralling story that provokes laughter, tears, and everything in between. It is highly recommended for all public libraries and academic libraries with adult Southern fiction collections or North Carolina author collections.

Lara Little  
Pfeiffer University



***Photography in Ashe County, North Carolina***

Kim Hadley and Doug Munroe  
Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company,  
2024. 303 pp. \$40.00.  
ISBN 978-1-4766-8938-8

**K**im Hadley and Doug Munroe, the authors of *Painters and Their Paintings: Ashe County, North Carolina* (2021), immerse the reader in inviting photographs and snippets of local history in their latest book, *Photography in Ashe County, North*

*Carolina*. This monograph showcases 388 stunning photographs taken by 76 professional and amateur photographers. The images feature historical Appalachian scenes, brilliantly hued landscapes, and the spooky abandoned buildings of yesteryear. Bright photos of Ashe County's flora and fauna are expertly juxtaposed next to beautiful antique black and white portraits and photographs of local farms and buildings.

As Hadley explains in the Preface, the authors put out a call for photographs taken within and of Ashe County, NC in 2021. The authors assembled a small team of experienced photographers to evaluate and select applicants' photographs. In the Introduction, Munroe highlights Ashe County institutions like the Catchlight Gallery in West Jefferson, an establishment that has allowed local photographers and high school photography students to display and sell their work.

Following the Introduction, the authors include a section titled "The History of Photography in Ashe County," which gives a brief overview of the history of photography in general before going on to detail more local history. This section is illustrated with 19th century daguerreotype portraits, as well as impressive images of rural landscapes, gatherings, workers, schoolchildren, and other historical scenes. The chapter ends with a few modern photographs, including a striking landscape image showing more than a dozen emergency vehicles traveling to assist with the COVID-19 pandemic in New York City.

The main section of the book is arranged alphabetically by photographer and contains a few examples of each individual's work. The wide array of subject matter includes wildlife, still lifes, antique farm equipment, architecture, and even vibrant shots of galaxies high above Ashe County. The authors also clearly included a range of both professional and amateur work. Though many photographs were shot with professional equipment, several beautiful stills were shot with ordinary iPhone cameras. The inclusion of amateur work adds to a sense of possibility that may inspire readers to take a turn behind the lens.

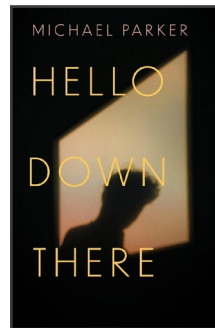
Alongside spectacular photographs and descriptions, each photographer's section contains their own words expressing the joy of photography, detailing

their equipment, or noting their training and inspirations. The use of the photographers' own words strengthens the reader's sense of local community, authenticity, and connection.

Finally, the book includes a Glossary of Terms, Historical Image Resources for Ashe County, a Bibliography, and an Index. The Glossary of Terms will be particularly useful for students and other laypersons unfamiliar with technical terminology. For readers who would like to further their research, the Historical Image Resources for Ashe County provides specific and helpful information on where to begin.

*Photography in Ashe County, North Carolina* would make a great addition to high school, public, or university library collections. The variety of subject matter will appeal to many readers, including art enthusiasts, bird watchers, local historians, as well as visitors and locals across North Carolina.

*Laura Bright*  
East Carolina University



### *Hello Down There*

Michael Parker  
Durham, NC: Blair, 2024.  
273pp. \$17.95.  
ISBN 97801-9588-8822-3

Read in NC LIVE's HomeGrown  
Collection

The 2024 Blair edition of *Hello Down There* marks the rerelease of Michael Parker's debut novel, originally published in 1993. Since its first release, Parker has received numerous accolades, including the Hobson Award for Arts and Letters, the North Carolina Award for Literature, the R. Hunt Parker Award, and the 2020 Thomas Wolfe Prize. He is also a three-time recipient of the O. Henry Prize. Beyond his novels, Parker's short fiction and nonfiction have been featured in esteemed publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *Oxford American*. After nearly three decades teaching in the MFA Writing Program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Parker joined the Warren Wilson Program for Writers in 2009, where he continues to mentor emerging authors.

*Hello Down There* is set in the fictional town of Trent, North Carolina, in the 1950s. The setting closely mirrors small-town life, with images of tight-knit communities and streets lined with family-owned businesses. The novel follows Edwin Keane, a wealthy young man battling addiction, and explores his relationships, both with his family and the townspeople. Among the central figures are Eureka, Edwin's love interest; her brother, Randall; and their father, Speight—a farming family forced to relocate to town after their land became too difficult to work.

Another significant character is Roy Green, the local pharmacist. Roy has a subtle hero complex, believing it is his duty to save Keane from his addiction. To this end, he deliberately delays filling Keane's prescriptions, which are delivered by the pharmacy's delivery boy, Randall. Keane's life begins to change when he ventures out of his home after months of isolation and meets Eureka. Struck by her beauty, he becomes infatuated and is determined to pursue a relationship with her. Upon learning of Randall and Eureka's sibling relationship, Keane convinces him to deliver letters and arrange secret meetings with Eureka.

Eventually, Keane decides to confront his addiction, driven by his desire to further his relationship with Eureka and his increasing difficulty in obtaining medication. Following Roy's urging, Keane agrees to seek treatment at a hospital for addicts in Kentucky. The group—composed of Keane, Eureka, Roy, and Keane's driver, Deems—embarks on the journey. The

trip proves pivotal for everyone. While Keane undergoes treatment, Roy grapples with his ties to Trent and becomes obsessed with rescuing Eureka from Keane, whom he deems unworthy of her. Eureka, meanwhile, grows bored and discontented, longing for the comfort of her brother Randall. Deems, exploring Lexington independently, enjoys the city and its people but looks forward to reuniting with his family.

The novel's structure is carefully crafted, balancing a well-paced narrative with deep character exploration. The plot is believable within its historical and social context, and the setting functions almost as a character itself, shaping the lives and actions of those within it. The characters are well-developed, each with distinct motivations and emotions. Written in a third-person omniscient point of view, the novel offers insight into multiple characters' thoughts and experiences, adding to the reader's understanding of the tensions and relationships that drive the story.

*Hello Down There* will appeal to a wide range of readers, from students to general audiences. It would be a valuable addition to public and academic library collections, particularly those focused on North Carolina authors and settings, as it highlights the complexities of life in a specific region of the state.

*Erin Gray*  
*East Carolina University*

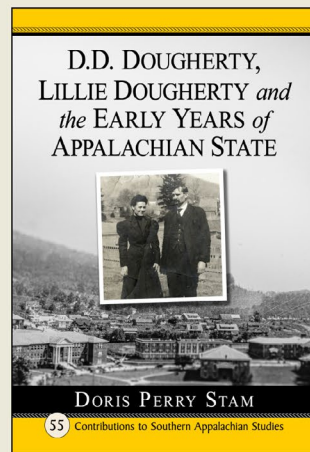
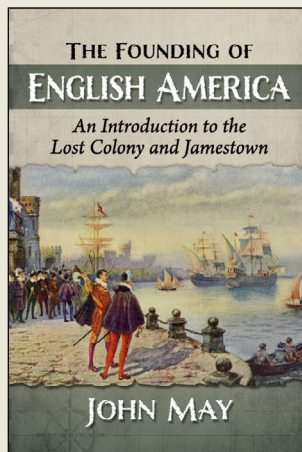
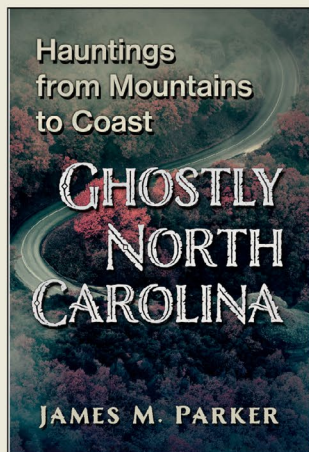
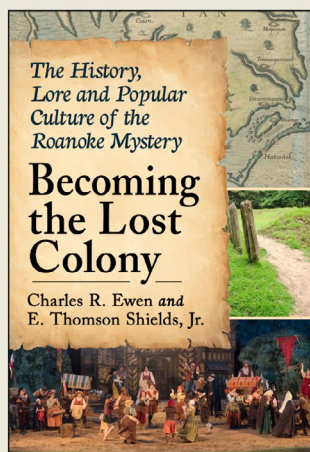
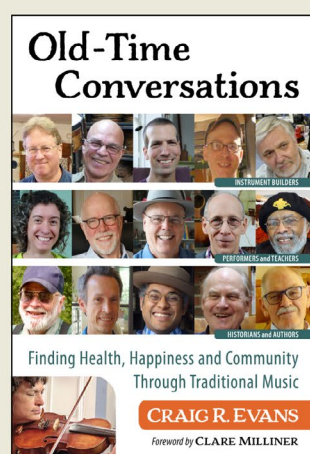
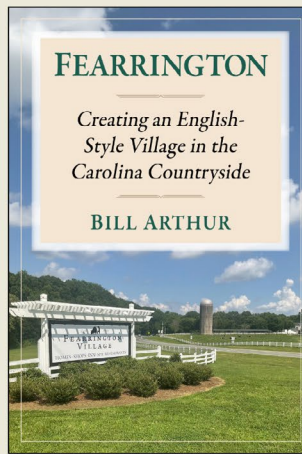
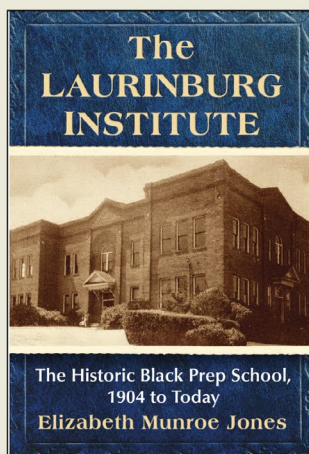
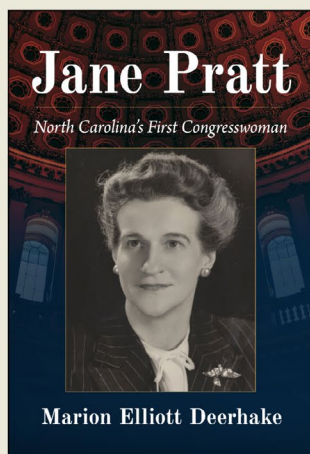
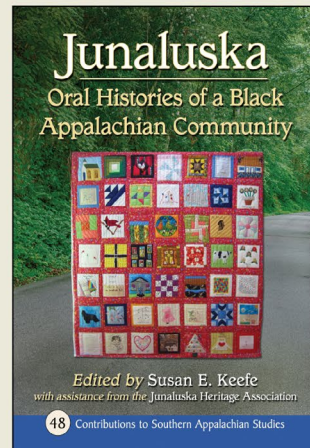
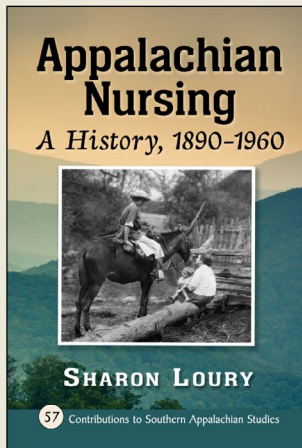
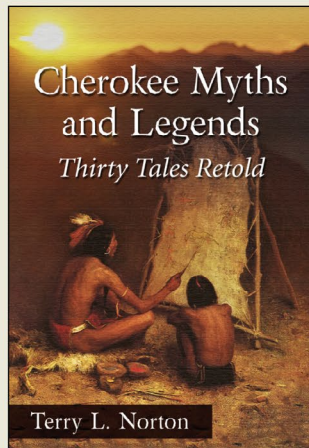
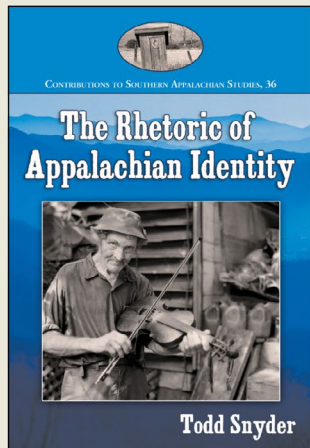
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Looking for more works by North Carolinians or set in our state? You can always search [goodreads](#), [LibraryThing](#), or the catalog of your local library. Don't forget to browse your favorite bookstore! UNCG Libraries has also created a [Literary Map of North Carolina](#) to help identify authors from your county.

If your interest in North Carolina is more general, the North Carolina Collection at UNC-Chapel Hill frequently updates their blog with new acquisitions to the collection and other posts related to the history, literature, and culture of our state. Connect to the [NC Miscellany](#) here.



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