

NORTH CAROLINA



Books

Robert G. Anthony, Jr., Compiler

When one of the state's most popular, well-known, and admired native sons describes a volume as "the most interesting book about North Carolina I've ever read — and one of the most interesting books about anything," most of us sit up and take notice. That's what Charles Kuralt said about this book, and the publisher has, appropriately, put that quotation on the dustjacket.

It's hard to find fault with Kuralt's evaluation. This anthology of one hundred essays was designed as a sampler of the rich diversity of North Carolina. It fulfills that promise. The editorial combination of Jack Claiborne, longtime associate editor of *The Charlotte Observer*, and William Price, Director of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, is a winner.

The book is divided into four sections: environment, people, events, and "social fabric." Selections are brief, usually three or four pages, and are arranged roughly chronologically within each section. The editors used North Carolina writers whenever possible, and their choices are wise ones. Well-known voices of the state are here: John Lawson, Gerald Johnson, Thomas Wolfe, Reynolds Price, Jonathan Daniels, Sam Ervin, Fred Chappell, Doris Betts, Terry Sanford, and others. Harry Golden's classic, "The Vertical Negro Plan" for integration, is included, as is a revealing essay about Billy Graham by Frye Gaillard.

Newcomers and natives alike will delight in the writings of O. Henry and in essays about Chang and Eng Bunker, the original Siamese twins; in George Moses Horton, the slave poet of Chapel Hill; Frank Porter Graham; Andy Griffith; Ava Gardner; and James Buchanan Duke. Lesser known North Carolinians with equally compelling stories include Harriet Jacobs, Clement Exum, Annie

Lowrie Alexander, and Harriet Morehead Berry. The volume ends with essays by two of the state's best known contemporary historians, H. G. Jones's "Seeking Inspiration from History" and William S. Powell's "Why We're Called Tar Heels."

A few organizational changes would have made this anthology more useful. The book needs an index. While there is a table of contents, the titles of the essays often give no indication of the subject. Who would know that an essay titled "A Buttoned-Down Boat-Rocker" is about Julius Chambers? And while the reader may guess that "A Power in the East" is about Jesse Helms, it's not so easy to guess that "A Prophet Without Honor" is Archibald De Bow Murphy. Similar examples abound. An index would also provide needed access to topics or places within essays.

Sources for each section are listed only in the back of the book. Putting the source at the end of each selection would have been helpful to readers. Each essay is preceded by editorial comments. Printing those comments in italics or in some other distinctive type would have helped the reader distinguish them easily from the essay following.

These reservations, however, are minor in the overall evaluation of this fine volume. It's likely to be one that librarians and library users enjoy equally. *Discovering North Carolina* is recommended for middle school and above, for all public libraries, and for academic libraries supporting local history collections or classes in North Carolina history. It would also be a welcome and much-used addition to personal bookshelves.

— Alice R. Cotten, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Jack Claiborne and William Price, eds.

Discovering North Carolina: A Tar Heel Reader

Chapel Hill: University of North
Carolina Press, 1991.
372 pp. \$24.95. ISBN 0-8078-1931-X.



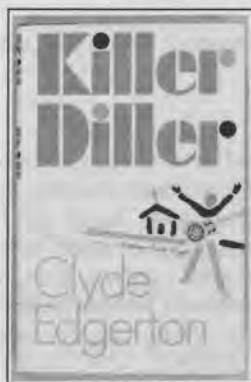
Fans of Raney Bell and Mattie Rigsbee, heroines of Clyde Edgerton's earlier comic novels, will welcome *Killer Diller* with eagerness. On the other hand, anyone who was offended by the gentle fun the author had with Southern Baptists in his first two books had better avoid his latest offering. While *Raney* and *Walking Across Egypt* good humoredly described the simple, sincere faith of unsophisticated small town people, *Killer Diller* goes after the calculated religious posturing of certain members of the church's bureaucracy with sharply pointed satire.

Killer Diller is Wesley Benfield's story, continued about nine years after Mattie Rigsbee of *Walking Across Egypt* took him in from the reformatory and tried to civilize him. (Mattie, having slowed down quite a bit, is unfortunately a very minor character in this novel.) Wesley is twenty-four years old now and a faithful churchgoer, bricklayer, aspiring blues musician, and, because of his unfortunate inability to pass up a car with the keys left in it, a resident of BOTA House (BOTA for Back on Track Again), a halfway house run by Ballard University.

Clyde Edgerton.

Killer Diller

Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 1991.
247 pp. \$17.95. ISBN 0-945575-53-X.



Ballard University is an up-and-coming Baptist school. Among its many community service projects are Nutrition House, where overweight Christians can solve their problems with the help of Jesus; Project Promise, a vocational education program in which BOTA residents tutor special education students; and a gospel band called the Noble Defenders of the Word. These all generate favorable publicity for the university, as well as some grant money. The administration is also quietly courting Eastern LinkComm, an important local industry, and hoping soon to be exerting influence in Washington.

Wesley, in spite of all these good influences, is still essentially an unsocialized yahoo. Also he is nobody's fool. While he's trying hard to be a good Christian, breaking himself of swearing by putting "n" in front of all the bad words ("Nodamn!"), as he reads his Bible, he realizes there's a lot there that they don't tell you about in Sunday School. If David didn't get in immediate trouble over Bathsheba, he reasons, why shouldn't he put the moves on Phoebe, his girlfriend from Nutrition House? Wesley's freewheeling code of ethics and morality stands in sharp contrast to the slick hypocrisy of the university's administrators, which he recognizes for what it is. His affection and concern for Mattie are genuine, and he has learned from her to do good to the least of his brethren, as evidenced in his relationship with Vernon, his possum-faced Project Promise student.

The religious satire in *Killer Diller* may offend some readers, as may the equal opportunity racial slurs voiced by some of the characters. The plot is disjointed; and the conclusion, which is told as a confusing dream Wesley has while fleeing Ballard with Phoebe, Vernon, and the Noble Defenders of the Word on their way to blues fame, is weak. Nevertheless, Edgerton has created some wonderful farce here, and the novel is recommended for public, school, and academic libraries.

— Dorothy Hodder, New Hanover County Public Library

Published for the Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina to commemorate that organization's fiftieth anniversary, *North Carolina Architecture* beautifully reflects significant advancements made in the field of architectural history during the past half century. The book was inspired by Bayard Wooten and Archibald Henderson's *Old Homes and Gardens of North Carolina* (1939) and by Frances Benjamin Johnston and Thomas Tileston Waterman's *The Early Architecture of North Carolina: A Pictorial Survey* (1941). All three titles contain important photographs of some of the state's architectural treasures, but the scope and scholarly underpinning of Bishir's book enhance its value as an educational tool.

The endnotes and bibliography provide clear evidence of the enormous amount of research that enabled Bishir to write her lively narrative. The author studied printed and manuscript sources in a variety of libraries and archives. She also made free use of the scores of National Register of Historic Places nominations, research reports, and published architectural surveys written by staff members of, or consultants hired by, the North Carolina Division of Archives and History's Survey and Planning Branch. Bishir headed this branch from the early 1970s until 1987 and thus played an important role in the state's quest to preserve a record of a fast-disappearing building environment.

This raw material provided a solid foundation for the author's carefully crafted analysis of architectural styles and building types during the period

Catherine W. Bishir.

North Carolina Architecture

Photography by Tim Buchman.
Chapel Hill: University of North
Carolina Press, 1990.
514 pp. \$59.95. ISBN 0-8078-1923-9.



from the early eighteenth century to about 1940. Unlike the writers of fifty years ago, Bishir explains architectural trends in terms of the socio-economic context in which they developed. Furthermore, she discusses not only the premier plantation houses of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but also the homes or farm complexes of people of modest means. These, like factories, commercial buildings, and structures built by churches, educational institutions, and state and local governments are discussed in part as the attempt of people to meet a need or to convey an image. Herein lies the educational value of the book. The reader learns why buildings were built and, in many cases, who designed them. Construction methods are discussed. Bishir tells about site selection and how structures in a farm complex, mill village, or early twentieth-century suburb are related to one another.

The book's many illustrations amplify these concepts. Floor plans for some of the buildings reveal room relationships. Site plans show how farmers chose to locate their barns and other dependencies. Tim Buchman's exquisite black-and-white photographs of exteriors often convey a sense of place. Interior views skillfully document woodwork or other decorative details. His eighteen color plates at the end of the text are a benediction.

The Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina and its many benefactors deserve praise for sponsoring *North Carolina Architecture*. Providing a synthesis of many years of research, the book will serve the state well until additional survey work and historical research merit a new publication. Until then, schoolchildren and patrons of all public and academic libraries in North Carolina will be inspired by what they find in this volume.

— Maurice C. York, East Carolina University

Even though it was the sex that got folks excited over the Equal Rights Amendment, the ERA was no more about sex than it was about equality. In *Sex, Gender and the Politics of ERA*, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill history professors Donald G. Mathews and Jane Sherron De Hart claim that the fight over women's rights really boiled down to a gender conflict. This in-depth look at the struggle for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment in North Carolina traces its roots to the suffrage movement and places the North Carolina experience within the context of the national push for ERA ratification.

The study is both chronological and topical. The authors first give a straightforward history of the ERA in North Carolina in a concise and engaging narrative. The reader is introduced to the multifaceted issues, the complex political process, and a long string of key players—the numerous women who organized on both sides of the issue and the legislators who fought the battle over the ERA.

The second half of the book concentrates on what the ratification experience meant to those involved. Here the authors deliver an amazingly fresh and insightful analysis of the discourse between the two sides by exploring contested political territory through the symbolic rhetoric of the warring factions.

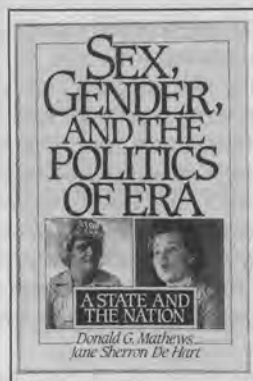
The voices of the women themselves—extracted from passionate speeches, strategic letters, and reflective interviews—give life to this otherwise academic and complex discussion. By letting the women tell much of the story in their own words, the authors break through the stereotypes of the “legal libbers” and the “emotional housewives” and demonstrate how a bid for equality became a fight over the cultural definition of womanhood.

In light of the thoroughness and sensitivity exhibited by the authors in this study, it is surprising to find so little mentioned about the role of black women and the relationship between the ERA and Civil Rights movements. Were there really so few black ERA activists? If so, why? What were the responses of black communities to the ERA? Although the authors readily point out that the ERA was basically a movement of white women, they never explore why this would be so and thus missed an excellent opportunity to look at the impact of race on what they have clearly defined as a gender issue.

A more technical shortcoming of the book is the lack of a comprehensive bibliography. The footnotes are packed with valuable information on collections of personal and political papers, names of interviewees, references to newspaper articles, and citations to related books on the subject. Yet, with the exception of an appendix which lists the names and dates of interviews, there is no handy list which pulls all these sources together.

Donald G. Mathews and Jane Sherron De Hart.
***Sex, Gender, and the Politics of
 ERA: A State and the Nation***

New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
 283 pp. \$24.95. ISBN 0-19-503-858-4.



These limitations should not discount the overriding value of the book which breaks new ground on several fronts. The narrative provides a critical piece of North Carolina's political history. The analysis of the rhetoric used in the political process adds new dimension to current perceptions of the ERA conflict. An obvious choice for academic libraries, this book would also be appropriate for most public libraries in the state.

— Ginny Daley, Duke University

For the people of North Carolina, no twentieth century election has held the mystique or the emotion of the 1950 U.S. Senate Democratic primary election campaigns between the liberal Frank Porter Graham and his conservative opponent Willis Smith. Graham, long-time president of the consolidated University of North Carolina, was recognized internationally as a leading proponent of social and racial reforms. In 1949 Governor W. Kerr Scott appointed him to a vacancy in the U.S. Senate, a selection that antagonized conservative Democrats throughout the state. As the 1950 election approached, conservatives, fearful of Graham's liberal tendencies, sought to identify a viable opponent who would be more palatable to their own political convictions. Conservative Democrats found a champion in the respected Raleigh attorney Willis Smith; and, with former U.S. Senator Robert B. Reynolds serving as a spoiler candidate in the first primary, the stage was set for the most controversial campaign the state had experienced in modern times.

The much beloved and universally respected "Dr. Frank" was the overwhelming favorite for election, but 1950 was not a time for passionless deliberation. Many Southerners resented the liberal thrust of the Harry Truman presidential administration and the U.S. Supreme Court challenges to racial segregation. Coupled with these issues was the frenzied rhetoric of U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy, who claimed that the federal government was overrun by Communist operatives and fellow travelers.

Smith supporters took advantage of the fears and uncertainty of the populace, as well as the political ineptness of Senator Graham himself. Despite the repeated urging of his supporters, the senator refused to renounce his membership or involvement in numerous controversial organizations, criticize his opponent, or make campaign promises. Although Graham held a commanding lead in the first primary, Smith supporters carried the run-off election by resorting to distortions, personal attacks, and outright fabrications to prey upon racial and economic fears. With this backdrop, there is little wonder that the Graham-Smith campaign became known as the bitterest, most vicious, most racially oriented encounter of the twentieth

century. The campaign also appears to have served as a training ground for many of the political leaders who have since dominated North Carolina politics.

Pleasant and Burns, both native North Carolinians who studied history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, have crafted a highly readable, thoroughly researched, and carefully documented study of North Carolina's most emotionally charged election. Rather than perpetuating traditions that sprang from the contest, they have carefully dissected the campaign and explored the strengths and weaknesses of both major candidates. While they extol the "Christ-like" qualities that endeared Dr. Graham to his multitude of followers, they also reveal the political and social naivete that plagued Graham the candidate and continuously embarrassed and confounded his cadre of handlers. This is a solid study not only of North Carolina politics but also of an era in the state's history when social change was wrenching at the very foundation of the people's psyche. It gives concrete form to the dichotomy that was and in many respects still is North Carolina.

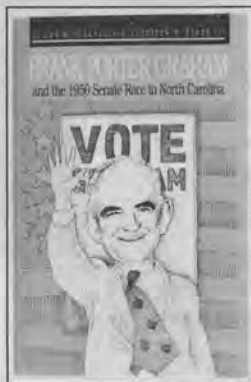
There is no question that *Frank Porter Graham and the 1950 Senate Race in North Carolina* is an important study of modern North Carolina. Even younger readers, who were not living in 1950, will relate the issues and the personalities to more recent contests of which they do have recollections. The book should be included in every academic and major public library in the state.

— Donald R. Lennon, East Carolina University

Julian M. Pleasants and
Augustus M. Burns III.

Frank Porter Graham and the 1950 Senate Race in North Carolina.

Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina
Press, 1990.
356 pp. \$29.95. ISBN 0-8078-1933-6.



OTHER PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Durham County: A History of Durham County, North Carolina by Jean Bradley Anderson is sure to be a model for future Tar Heel county histories. Wide-ranging and scholarly, well-illustrated, with extensive bibliography and personal name and subject indexes, plus appendixes of elected officeholders and local officials, the book details the history of this important Piedmont county from Indian settlement through 1981, its centennial year. Great care has been taken to include all aspects of the county's heritage—economic, political, educational, religious, social, and cultural. The result is an impressive work, one destined to be the definitive history of Durham County for years to come. (1990; Duke University Press, 6697 College Station, Durham, North Carolina 27708; 611 pp.; \$27.50; ISBN 0-8223-1056-2).

Jerry Bledsoe has delighted Tar Heels for years with his columns in Greensboro and Charlotte newspapers. In *The Bare-Bottomed Skier and Other Unlikely Tales*, he gathers some of his funniest work, his first humor collection since the 1981 publication of *Where's Mark Twain when We Really Need Him?* The sixty selections in this latest collection offer ample evidence that Bledsoe, also the author of ten other books including the national bestseller *Bitter Blood*, retains his radar-like ability to spot the comical. (1990; Down Home Press, P.O. Box 4126, Asheboro, N.C. 27204; 214 pp.; \$14.95; ISBN 0-9624255-8-3).

From the mid-1660s until shortly after World War I, the pursuit of whales frequently brought excitement to Tar Heel coastal waters. In *Whaling on the North Carolina Coast*, Marcus B. Simpson, Jr., and Sallie W. Simpson offer a well-crafted narrative of these encounters with Earth's largest creatures. They tell how shore-based local residents seized beached whales or used small rowing boats to reach ones trapped in shallow waters. Whalers in sailing ships, mostly based in New York and New England, practiced pelagic, or open sea, whaling in deeper waters, especially in the "Hatteras ground" northeast of Cape Hatteras. The authors also describe the boats, whale guns, harpoons, and other equipment used; and they discuss the removal of whalebone, oils, and other valued parts from whale carcasses. The Simpsons's history of whaling was first published in the *North Carolina Historical Review*, where it won the 1988 Robert D. W. Connor Award for best article. (1990; Historical Publications Section, Division of Archives and History, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, N.C. 27601-2807; 51 pp.; pbk.; \$3.00, plus \$1.00 postage and handling; ISBN 0-86526-242-X).

The Paul Green Foundation, in association with Appalachian Consortium Press, has recently announced publication of *Paul Green's Wordbook, an Alphabet of Reminiscence*. This unique collection of tales, remedies, words, plant lore, games, songs, and other expressions of the people is a record of the interests and observations made during more than fifty years by the late Paul Green, North Carolina Dramatist Laureate and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright. Although best known for his dramas, Green was also a writer of short stories, novels, essays, poetry, and motion picture screenplays. Through the generosity of the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, the Prickett Fund, the Paul Green Foundation, and many private contributors, the two-volume, 1,280-page set is available free to North Carolina libraries. It may be obtained by writing to:

Appalachian Consortium Press
University Hall
Appalachian State University
Boone, North Carolina 28608

Libraries are asked to include \$5.00 with their requests to cover shipping and postage costs. If this cost presents a hardship, however, they may state so in their letters of request.



The eighty-eight columns collected by long-time Charlotte sportswriter Ron Green in *From Tobacco Road to Amen Corner: On Sports and Life* range widely over the sporting field—baseball, basketball, football, golf, boxing, automobile racing, track, and pool. As would be expected, the legends are there, many with North Carolina roots, such as Charlie "Choo Choo" Justice, Richard Petty, Junior Johnson, David Thompson, Michael Jordan, Dean Smith, Billy Joe Patton, Arnold Palmer. But Green's brief essays also celebrate the weekend golf game, the corner pool hall, the scruffy angler on the coastal pier. Whether writing about the famous or the unsung—or of family and friendship in several non-sports columns—Green offers observations about life gleaned during his more than forty years of sportswriting. (1990; Down Home Press, P.O. Box 4126, Asheville, N.C. 27204; 215 pp.; \$17.95; ISBN 0-9624255-9-1).

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