
North Carolina Books

Robert Anthony, Compiler

Stephen E. Massengill and Robert M. Topkins. *A North Carolina Postcard Album, 1905-1925*. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1988. 172 pp. \$55.00. ISBN 0-86526-236-5.

Postcards have a long history. They were introduced in Austria in 1869, and the United States government issued official postcards in 1873. The year 1898, however, marks a major milestone. Government legislation for the first time permitted private companies to issue cards that could be mailed for one cent, half the first-class rate.

This single development had explosive results. Large companies were formed to produce cards, but, perhaps more importantly, many small companies as well as private individuals got into the act. Eastman Kodak introduced photographic paper in the postcard format that could be printed from negatives exposed in its two-dollar camera. Amateurs loved it. An additional stimulus came in 1907 when the government allowed handwritten messages on half of the address side of a card. It is estimated that from 1907 to 1914 perhaps a billion postcards were produced. This was the heyday of the medium.

The second-class postcard does not often get first-class treatment. In *A North Carolina Postcard Album, 1905-1925*, Stephen Massengill and Robert Topkins have attempted just that. The format of this hardbound volume is large. Page size is eleven by fourteen inches, definitely coffee-table material. It has a table of contents as well as an index. The real story of this book, however, is the picture postcards, all 520 of them.

Categorizing a large and diverse group of images is no small task. The authors came up with a dozen divisions that constitute the arrangement of the postcards—(1) Cities, (2) Small Towns, (3) Transportation, (4) Agriculture, Industry, Business, and Commerce, (5) Education and Religion, (6) Social Life and Popular Diversions, (7) Hotels and Inns, (8) Parades and Public Gatherings, (9) Mishaps, Fires, and Floods, (10) Novelties, (11) County Courthouses, and

(12) Everyday Life. This arrangement allows the reader to start anywhere in the book with equal ease.

Commercially produced postcards usually present sanitized scenes—pristine landscapes, prosperous and bustling cities, streetcars, trains, automobiles, and thoroughfares without a rut or pothole in sight. Fortunately for us, the farther postcard makers were from major cities, the less attention they paid to such details.

A North Carolina Postcard Album, 1905-1925, gives a real cross section of life in the state from places such as Waynesville in the west to Winterville in the east. Exotic-sounding names like Hotel Zinzendorf (Winston-Salem) or Niagara (Moore County) evoke thoughts of places far away. The diversity of subjects depicted is sure to keep the reader's mind from wandering. There are fires, floods, fish markets, hardware stores, textile mills, academies, orphanages, baptisms, county fairs, chain gangs, circus parades, picnics, beach trips, tobacco warehouses, and the cotton patch. Do you remember how grand our train stations once looked? It is all here and more.

Stephen E. Massengill and Robert M. Topkins, both employees with the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, are avid postcard collectors. This volume was surely their labor of love. It was years in production, and their search for images led them to diverse collections both public and private. Photographic reproductions are of good quality, images are well identified, and layout is uncluttered. The book is an attractive work and should appeal to libraries with state and local history collections.

Much can be said for supplementing printed history with the photographic record. *A North Carolina Postcard Album, 1905-1925*, along with H.G. Jones' *North Carolina Illustrated, 1524-1984*, are books of choice in this category. It is difficult to see how this volume can be eclipsed on the subject of North Carolina postcards. Perhaps that will be of some consolation to those who pay its \$55.00 price.

Jerry Cotton, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Laurence Naumoff, *The Night of the Weeping Women*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1988. 239 pp. \$16.95. ISBN 0-87113-187-0.

F. Scott Fitzgerald once compared bitter family quarrels to "splits in the skin that won't heal because there's not enough material." Sometimes the deep psychic wounds that result are infected long before there is any visible sign of pain or distress. Within the insular vacuum of family life some members may cling to their private suffering as a drowning man to a lifeline, and this may go on for years because it is their only contact with reality. But when the charade of Beaver Cleaver-like order can no longer be maintained within the household, all the ruined visions and past betrayals may rise as one. Laurence Naumoff's unsettling first novel, *The Night of the Weeping Women*, unfolds just as the carnage begins.

The civilized world lived in houses. Within the houses the most uncivilized things took place. Family members ate into each other. They cut each other up and then ate from the leftover torsos with forks, all the while ignoring the screams of the children who knew they were next.

This passage accurately reflects the hostility and deep resentment that has broken the spirit and stability of the "civilized" Neal family. Ervin and Margaret no longer live with their daughter Sally, who has married; yet the motions and rituals of familial duty are still observed with a grim inevitability, as if walking through a minefield. Thanksgiving and Christmas, times of togetherness, each year approach like harbingers of doom. This is a family where closeness is repugnant, where each member's mere presence becomes an unspoken, savage condemnation against the other.

Clearly these people have a dark history, and Naumoff examines the Neals, and to some extent their in-laws, in tight, unsparing closeup, in a language both lyrical and ferociously precise. It is at times an uncomfortable reading experience—these people are our neighbors (maybe ourselves). Almost the entire action occurs during the "season to be jolly," when that minefield begins to explode. Naumoff divides our attention equally between enemy camps (outside Chapel Hill and Wilmington), as husband and wife, parents and child square off with some of the wickedest, darkly comic dialogue in recent memory. It all culminates in a nighttime battle royal, when all the unwelcome, ugly secrets from the past emerge like poisonous mushrooms.

A native of Charlotte, Naumoff writes knowingly of a region and its inhabitants that readers

in public libraries will recognize. This story of collective family guilt, however, has profound universal elements. He is a writer to watch closely.

Sam Shapiro, *Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County*

Hugh M. Morton and Edward L. Rankin, Jr. *Making a Difference in North Carolina*. Raleigh: Lightworks, 1988. 319 pp. \$39.95. ISBN 0-942399-06-4.

It contains extensive text and 400 photographs, measures ten by fourteen inches, weighs six and a quarter pounds, and concludes with an index reading like a Who's Who of North Carolina during the past half century. Most of all, this huge book is literally *Making a Difference in North Carolina*.

Hugh Morton, whose family is noted for its development and promotion of natural and historical attractions on the coast and in the mountains, was only thirteen when he sold his first photograph for publication. In the subsequent fifty-four years, he has attained the uncontested if unofficial title of Photographer Laureate of North Carolina, and his enormous collection of negatives is the state's most important single photographic resource for the middle quarters of the twentieth century. But Morton is more than a recorder of events; he has also been a major participant in both governmental and private enterprise promoting North Carolina.

Morton alone could have produced a book of significance, but what makes the difference in this work is his collaboration with another versatile Tar Heel whose strength has been the pen rather than the camera. Edward L. Rankin, Jr., was a newsman before becoming a confidante of and administrator for three governors (Umstead, Hodges, and Moore). In those capacities and in his later years in the private sector, Rankin has been associated with Morton in a variety of undertakings. It is not surprising, therefore, that the two authors appear together in several of the photographs.

Making a Difference in North Carolina, though, is more than the personal story of two friends, for it covers a remarkable range of personalities and events of the past half century. Its inclusiveness is demonstrable: every gubernatorial administration beginning with Hoke; every U.S. senatorial term beginning with Hoke except East's; most major public events from inaugurations to cultural celebrations; most nationally known North Carolina personalities from Billy Graham to Carbine Williams; lesser-known but

interesting characters like David Haywood and Joe Hartley; even the destruction wrought by Hurricane Hazel and the controversy over the location of the Blue Ridge Parkway. True-blue Tar Heels, the authors naturally give disproportionate space to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and its athletics, but there are also chapters on "Peahead" Walker and Meadowlark Lemon and coverage of "Bones" McKinney, Wallace Wade, Leroy Walker, Richard Petty, and other sports figures.

One of the most poignant chapters relates Rankin's experience during the illness and death of Governor Umstead. Then just thirty-five years old, the private secretary served several days as virtually the acting governor. Another touching chapter recounts the visit of a terminally ill black butler from North Carolina's Executive Mansion, "Uncle Dave" Haywood, to the White House, where he knelt and kissed the arm of a chair once occupied by President Franklin Roosevelt.

The best surprises, however, lie in the youthful faces of now-famous North Carolinians—county commissioner Jim Martin at the unveiling (by President Nixon) of a marker at Billy Graham's birthplace; student Orville Campbell with All-American George Glamack, his campaign manager for editorship of the *Daily Tar Heel*; student Louis Harris (whom Campbell defeated) with visiting lecturer Eleanor Roosevelt; amateur Andy Griffith playing the role of Sir Walter Raleigh in the *Lost Colony*; and slim, hairy-headed Charles Kuralt interviewing Governor Hodges in 1960.

Each reader will choose his favorite picture story. Two probable candidates show thirty-five-year-old Jim Hunt nursing a bear cub and a 1959 picture of actor Ronald Reagan holding Morton's second camera during an azalea festival in Wilmington. A unanimous choice is likely to be found on page 290—struggling young reporters Ed Rankin and Jesse Helms, roommates who shared a single bathroom with five other men, caught by an itinerant photographer as they strolled down Fayetteville Street in Raleigh a few months before Pearl Harbor.

Here is the book of the year for those with a very sturdy coffee table.

H.G. Jones, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Marie E. Bartlett, *Trooper Down! Life and Death on the Highway Patrol*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 1988. 215 pp. \$16.95. ISBN 0-912697-81-4.

If the reader forms his first impression of *Trooper Down!* by its title, the copy on the jacket, and the foreword by columnist James J. Kilpatrick, he might feel that he is in for a large dose of over-rated sensationalism. If so, this impression will evaporate by the time the reader reaches the middle of the first chapter. Marie Bartlett has produced an account of the life and work of the North Carolina Highway Patrol which is as informative as it is moving.

Born in Melbourne, Australia, Bartlett was reared in western North Carolina. As a freelance writer and Associated Press correspondent, she has published hundreds of articles in magazines and newspapers. *Trooper Down!* is her first book and began as a series of newspaper feature articles. Law enforcement and criminology are her special interests—she is currently working toward a degree in criminal justice, writing a novel about an international child-snatching ring, and serving as magistrate in her county. During her research for this book, she rode along on patrols, had access to the campus of the Highway Patrol Training Center in Garner, N.C. and interviewed dozens of troopers and trooper family members.

Large portions of *Trooper Down!* are written in troopers' own words with very little commentary from the author. It is largely through this technique that she succeeds in humanizing the men and women who are to most drivers anonymous and adversarial authority figures. She allows the troopers to speak to their readers about their rigorous training, the stresses on their personal and family lives, the temptations of the job, the boredom, and the always present dangers they face. The frustrations of the job range from the petty aggravation of not getting the new cruiser to the heartbreak of working for hours to free the one surviving child in a family car crushed under an overturned bus.

The lighter side of the job gets its turn as well—an injured drunk driver escapes on foot wearing a hospital gown, an elderly speeder explains she had never driven on high-test gas before, and a backseat assailant turns out to be an alarmed pet chimp.

But the constant threat of danger and the dedication and professionalism of the officers who meet that threat daily is the thread that unites *Trooper Down!* Bartlett opens the book with the wounding of one trooper on a traffic stop and concludes with the 1985 killings of three others. In each case she describes in detail the officer, his family and career, and the grueling police work needed to bring in the assailants. The senselessness and brutality of the attacks make for

hard reading.

Trooper Down! might best be described as an oral history of an institution which is widely taken for granted. There is no index or bibliography, but a number of black and white photographs add to the immediacy of the book. No one who has driven North Carolina's back roads and interstates can read it without the uneasy sensation of having unwittingly passed through scenes of crime and tragedy and human drama. *Trooper Down!* is a remarkable book, strongly recommended for public libraries and driver education courses.

Dorothy Davis, Nine Hanover County Public Library

John Ehle. *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation*. New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1988. 424 pp. \$19.95. ISBN 0-385-23953-X.

In 1984 North Point, a small press in San Francisco, had the surprise hit of the publishing season. *Son of the Morning Star*, Evan S. Connell's account of the obliteration of General George Custer's Seventh Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Bighorn, rose to the top of the bestseller lists. The story of the "Last Stand" and the fateful day of June 26, 1876, had been often told, but never with the style and sense of drama that Connell displayed. Now Doubleday and John Ehle have taken upon themselves the task of telling the story of the Cherokees, up through their removal from their homelands in 1838 by the federal government, in a single volume. The two books, upon initial examination, have much in common. Connell and Ehle are both successful writers in mid-career. Each has written nonfiction, but both are best known for their novels. Even the book covers and design are almost identical.

Ehle (as well as his editor Marshall DeBruhl) grew up in Asheville. Among his works of nonfiction is *The Free Men*, an account of the civil rights movement in Chapel Hill twenty-five years ago. His novel *The Winter People*, set in western North Carolina, was especially well received and was the basis for a motion picture. For this latest book Ehle turned to the published works of historians such as William G. McLoughlin and Duane H. King. From his notes and bibliography it is clear that he relied heavily upon their studies.

The special skills that one expects a writer such as Ehle to bring to the history of the Cherokee Nation are an aptitude for storytelling and a felicitous use of the language. The entire book is laid out as a series of episodes, and a few incidents, such as the visit of a Cherokee delegation

to Washington in 1819, do stand out. Extended portrayals of leaders such as Sequoyah, Major Ridge, and John Ross, are meticulously detailed and well drawn. But, too often, the author disappoints or confounds. Events rush by, with a host of characters appearing onstage for but a moment, allowing for little sense of continuity. Tenses shift and the voice of the narrator at times becomes that of one of the participants. Documents up to four printed pages in length are quoted in their entirety where the space could have been better used to fix their context and consequences. The prose, though at times appropriately dramatic, is as often ill chosen. Thus, "the river ran red" and "diarrhea and dysentery were gut-twisting in the camps." All of this makes for a narrative that is difficult to follow and less likely to be appreciated.

This is unfortunate, for the story of the Cherokees, their leaders, their capital at New Echota, the broken treaties, and the "Trail of Tears" is one as full of hope, dashed dreams, and palpable tragedy as any in American history. No doubt the book could have benefited from an editor's heavier hand, but it is possible that any attempt to cover so much in a single book is bound to fail. Whereas Connell could focus on the events of a single day, Ehle assumed a greater challenge. He is to be commended for the attempt, but the reader is advised to search the ever-increasing list of books on Cherokee history for another introduction to the subject.

Michael Hill, North Carolina Division of Archives and History

Other Publications of Interest

Records of the Executive Council, 1735-1754, volume eight of *The Colonial Records of North Carolina [Second Series]*, has recently been released by the Historical Publications Section of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History (109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, 27611, ISBN 0-86526-251-9, \$45.00 plus \$3.00 postage and handling). The volume presents minutes and official papers of the royal executive council, the key institution of central government in the colony. The council, composed of twelve men, advised the governor and had to concur in many of his more important executive actions. This 723-page volume, edited by Robert J. Cain, includes a lengthy introduction that sets the political, social, and economic scene in the colony and a detailed 176-page index to all individuals mentioned as well as to subjects.

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The University of North Carolina Press has issued a paperback edition of ***North Carolina: A History***, by William S. Powell. First published in 1978, the book offers a concise history of the state for the general reader. A new preface and concluding chapter bring the story into the 1980s. A "Suggestions for Further Reading" section and an index are also included, although illustrations are limited to two maps. (ISBN 0-8078-4219-2, \$8.95, paper, 231 pp.)

In ***Strengthened by the Storm: The Coming of the Mormons to Harkers Island, North Carolina, 1897-1909***, author Joel G. Hancock chronicles the struggles of members of the Church of Latter-day Saints to win tolerance and acceptance in one small coastal North Carolina community. He recounts a story of prejudice and violence encountered, but also one of eventual triumph. Although focused on Harkers Island, ***Strengthened by the Storm*** offers a glimpse of lifestyles and attitudes among turn-of-the-century coastal Carolinians. (Campbell and Campbell, Publishers, 710 Arendell Street, Morehead City, N.C., 28557-4259, ISBN 0-922005-001, \$19.95, cloth, 168 pp.)

The Courthouses of North Carolina and Tales That Whisper in the Stone celebrates those buildings where Tar Heels most often see their laws administered. Each of the state's 100 county courthouses currently in use is pictured in a black-and-white photograph and, for some counties, prior court buildings are also shown. For each courthouse, a short historical note gives information such as date of construction, architect, cost, and fate of earlier structures. Brief accounts of several of the state's legendary trials precede the photographic section. Both text and photographs are by Charles Heatherly. (Harrison Company, Publishers, P.O. Box 7500, Norcross, Ga., 30091-7500, ISBN 0-910694-03-6, \$29.95, cloth, 207 pp.)

In 1831, the first branch of the United States Mint opened at Charlotte to coin gold mined in the southeastern U.S. Except for a brief closing because of fire, it operated until the Civil War. In 1869 it reopened, although functioning as an assay office only, finally ceasing all operations in 1913. Today the building houses the Mint Museum of Art. The story of the mint is told in detail in ***The United States Branch Mint at Charlotte, North Carolina: Its History and Coinage***, by Clair M. Birdsall. In addition to this historical text there are charts and statistics on gold received and coinage issued and color illustrations of coins minted. The book also includes index and bibliography. (Southern Historical

Press, P.O. Box 738, Easley, S.C., 29641-0738, ISBN 0-89308-629-0, \$30.00, cloth, 123 pp.)

In ***Murder in the Carolinas***, Nancy Rhyne presents popularly written accounts of thirteen notorious homicides that took place in the Carolinas (six in North Carolina and seven in South Carolina). The earliest crime occurred in 1803, the latest in 1985. Rhyne describes the murder and any resulting legal trial. In some cases the perpetrators were brought to justice; in others, the apparent murderer escaped punishment. The North Carolina killings include the 1932 death of Zachary Smith Reynolds and the Klenner-Lynch murders/suicide in 1985. (John F. Blair, Publisher, ISBN 0-89587-063-0, \$7.95, paper, 166 pp.)

The restless dead, some of them victims of violence and some of accidental tragedies, frighten and perplex the living in ***Mountain Ghost Stories and Curious Tales of Western North Carolina***, by Randy Russell and Janet Barnett (John F. Blair, Publisher, ISBN 0-89587-064-9, \$8.95, cloth, 109 pp.). This collection of eighteen stories relates legends and tales of mysterious sights and sounds and of unexplained natural phenomena from the Blue Ridge and Smoky Mountains regions of the Tar Heel state. Some, such as the legend of the Brown Mountain Lights, will probably be familiar to most readers, but others may be new.

Read

