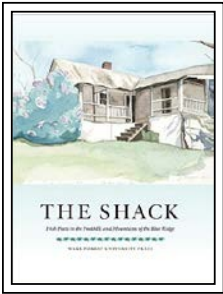


North Carolina Books

Al Jones, compiler



The Shack: Irish Poets in the Foothills and Mountains of the Blue Ridge

By Wake Forest University Press (Author), Jefferson Holdridge (Editor).
Winston-Salem: Wake Forest University Press, 2015.
71 pp. \$15.95. ISBN 978-1-930630-71-0.

For 40 years, Wake Forest University Press has been bridging the worlds of Ireland and North Carolina as the foremost publisher of Irish poetry in North America. Dillon Johnston, a retired Professor of English at Wake Forest University, who founded the press and ran it alongside his wife, Guinn Batten, saw the press as “a mediator between the American reader’s consciousness, the world we inhabit, and another world we otherwise could not.” This anthology is a celebration of Wake Forest University Press and more specifically, an homage to Johnston and Batten.

This slim anthology brings together the works of 11 Irish poets as they explore the connected worlds of their homeland in Ireland and the Piedmont region of North Carolina. The look and feel of the book are quite lovely with its large format accompanied by beautifully illustrated watercolors by North Carolina composer and artist, Kenneth Frazelle. It includes poetry and prose by Paul Muldoon, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, David Wheatley, John Montague,

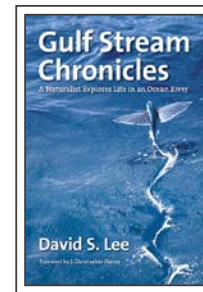
Elizabeth Wassell, Vona Groarke, Ciaran Carson, Medbh McGuckian, Conor O’Callaghan, Michael Longley, and Derek Mahon. All but one of the contributors have had their work previously published by the press and several have been visiting professors at Wake Forest University.

The anthology opens up with Paul Muldoon’s *Promises, Promises*, as he dabbles in the exploration of Sir Walter Raleigh and the lost colony of Roanoke. From there, the anthology takes the reader on a walk through North Carolina’s landscape from David Wheatley’s paintball canvas *Carolina Sky in ROYGBIV* to Vona Groarke’s persimmon tree in *Away* and Conor O’Callaghan’s blizzard of dogwood blossoms in *Swell*. Ciaran Carson and Medbh McGuckian provide meditations on North Carolina musical traditions from his tale of old-time music in *Fiddlin’ John’s Big Gobstopper* and her hearkening back to early Carolina love songs. Poems are interspersed with the authors’ tales of their visits to Wake Forest University, Johnston and Batten’s home in Virginia, the titular *Shack*, or their experience writing poetry for Wake Forest University Press. John Montague and Elizabeth Wassell write of their visit to the *Shack*, Johnston and Batten’s poetry refuge in Virginia, in *A Stoots Remembrance* as they find “Dillon himself, on a swing beneath a venerable tree, flying back and forth, up and down, a scholar and a gentleman, but also like a child.”

Though its individual elements are a bit disparate, Wake Forest University Press itself and the poets’ connections to Johnston and Dillon act as the core thread of this anthology. *The Shack* is

suitable for young adults and adults, those interested in Irish poets, poetry about the Piedmont region of North Carolina or those with specific interest in Winston-Salem and Wake Forest University. Recommended primarily for university libraries and public libraries in or around Winston-Salem and libraries with a special interest in Irish poetry.

Kristan E. Shawgo
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



Gulf Stream Chronicles: A Naturalist Explores Life in an Ocean River

By David S. Lee.
Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press,
2015. 282 pp. \$28.00. ISBN 978-1-4696-2393-1.

Many popular nature books focus on the seashore and its inhabitants. With *Gulf Stream Chronicles*, author David S. Lee takes readers beyond the shore and into pelagic, open-sea waters that even frequent beachgoers may never have the opportunity to visit. In the preface, Lee writes: “People who spend entire summers at the beach mistakenly think they are familiar with the sea. Thirty miles offshore it’s a totally different world, or at least the edge of one.”

In the chapters that follow, Lee

introduces readers to this new and different world. He describes the Gulf Stream as a river within the ocean, flowing its way up along the eastern coast of the United States before veering out into the northern Atlantic. Lee understands the interconnected nature of the oceanic world, and though he focuses his discussion on the waters off the coast of North Carolina, he wisely does not limit himself to the inhabitants or effects of the Gulf Stream there.

The text mixes scientific observations with anecdotes from years of research. Lee introduces many pelagic animals and plants, highlighting creatures such as the Portuguese man-of-war, the Bermuda petrel, the American shad, the ocean sunfish, and the pilot whale. In one chapter, Lee explains the incredible physiology of the leatherback sea turtle—a reptile that regularly swims and dives in subarctic waters where temperatures would kill other reptiles (and, indeed, many mammals). This is a truly specialized animal, and a truly endangered one. But there is hope—Lee points to the success of some conservation efforts, while recognizing that there is far to go in saving the species.

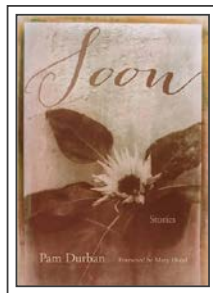
The text is accompanied by black-and-white maps, photographs, and line drawings. The appendix provides a guide to common and scientific names, as well as further discussion of species that may be found in the various oceanic zones that Lee highlights. There is also a chapter-by-chapter list of suggestions for further reading, as well as an index.

Lee spent thirty years working at the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences, where he served as Curator of Birds and conducted numerous research projects to document the state's birds, reptiles, fish, and other creatures. An avid naturalist and conservationist, he has authored over four hundred articles in scientific journals and popular magazines. *Gulf Stream Chronicles* is his first book.

Sadly, Lee passed away before the publication of this book, but his work lives on through his research and his many contributions to conservation efforts in North Carolina and beyond. Over the course of *Gulf Stream Chronicles*, Lee describes and illuminates many amazing creatures that are worth saving. In the postscript, he touches on some of the serious problems the western North Atlantic (and indeed all of the seas) are facing, and asks readers if they are ready to contribute to the cause of helping to save the seas. With Lee's work as a guide, the answer should be a resounding yes.

Gulf Stream Chronicles is recommended for library collections in North Carolina and beyond.

Anna Craft
University of North Carolina at
Greensboro



Soon: Stories

By Pam Durban.
Columbia: University of South Carolina Press,
2015. 115 pp. \$22.95. ISBN 978-1-61117-533-2.

“Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.” This quote, variously attributed to Plato, Philo of Alexandria, and Scottish theologian Ian Maclaren, would certainly apply to the protagonists of the eleven stories in the latest collection by Pam Durban, the Doris Betts Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

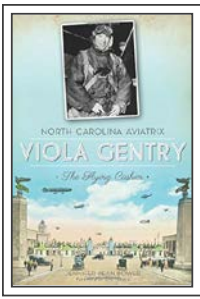
“Rowing to Darien” traces the panicked flight of English actress Fanny Kemble from an unhappy marriage in

pre-Civil War Georgia. An Ohio housewife looks back over her long marriage to a veteran of World War II in “The Jap Room.” A recently adopted ten-year old boy struggles with memories of his negligent mother in “Birth Mother”; a terminally ill cancer patient faces his mortality while engulfed in the darkness of Mammoth Cave in “Hush.” In “Gravity” a daughter visiting her ailing mother at an assisted living establishment in Charleston reflects on the place their black housekeeper, Mamie, occupies in their family history. “Soon,” the title story (selected by John Updike for inclusion in the anthology, *The Best American Short Stories of the Century*) illuminates the complicated relationship between a mother and daughter.

Some of the stories are told from the first person point of view, others from the third. They are set primarily in the South with an occasional foray into the Midwest; locations include Georgia, North and South Carolina, Ohio, and West Virginia. The characters are often but not always older, reflecting back on their lives as they search for meaning and hope. All the stories are beautifully written, with a keen eye for the telling detail that offers insight into secondary as well as principal characters.

A native of Aiken, South Carolina, Pam Durban cofounded the literary magazine *Five Points*. Her novels include *The Laughing Place*, (winner of the Townsend Prize), *So Far Back* (winner of the Lillian Smith Book Award), and *The Tree of Forgetfulness*. She is also the author of an earlier collection of short fiction, *All Set About with Fever Trees and Other Stories*. Highly recommended for academic and public libraries where literary fiction and short stories are in demand, particularly those who own the author's earlier works.

Janet Lockhart
Wake County Public Libraries



**North Carolina Aviatrix
Viola Gentry: The Flying Cashier**

Jennifer Bean Bower.
Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2015.
179 pp. \$19.99. ISBN 978-1-60949-695-1.

A handful of names—Amelia Earhart, Jacqueline Cochran, Sally Ride—represent the history of women’s flight for most of us. But scores of lesser-known women were involved in aviation’s beginnings in the early twentieth century. Author Jennifer Bean Bower profiles one of these forgotten luminaries, a woman once as recognizable as Earhart.

Viola Estelle Gentry was born in modest circumstances in 1894 in Gentry, a small town in Rockingham County, North Carolina. By 1902 Gentry’s mother had died, and the family moved to Danville, Virginia. Bower notes that Gentry was a spirited child who became known as “that naughty Gentry girl.” By age sixteen, she had made two failed attempts to run away: once to join the circus and another to elope with a mill hand. Afterwards Gentry’s father placed her with relatives and friends. While staying with relatives in Jacksonville, Florida in 1911, Gentry took her first airplane ride. The flight made a lasting impression.

While working as a San Francisco switchboard operator in 1919, Gentry witnessed a Hollywood stunt pilot land his plane on a hotel roof. Gentry thought, “If a man can do it, certainly a woman could.” She committed herself to aviation by reading books, talking to pilots, and saving for her first flying lesson in 1924.

Determined to make a name in

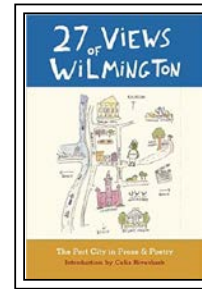
aviation, Gentry paid for the expense by cashiering at a French restaurant in New York. Gentry performed her first aerial stunt flying a rented Curtiss Oriole under the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges. National newspapers reported the stunt, making “the Flying Cashier” a celebrity. In 1928 she set the first-recorded women’s solo endurance record. She was one of the first women to receive a federal pilot’s license, and the first from North Carolina.

Ensuing decades found Gentry facing career and personal disappointments. She struggled as a hotel receptionist and housekeeper to fund her flying and was hurt during a 1929 endurance flight that killed her co-pilot. Bower argues that the long-term effects of Gentry’s injuries closed many doors. Nonetheless she continued to fly when possible and promoted women’s aviation as a charter member of the Ninety-Nines. Because of her connections to early aviators, Gentry helped form the History of Aviation Collection at the University of Texas. In 1975 she self-published her research in *Hanger Flying: Stories of Early Flyers in America*.

Bower won a 2015 Willie Parker Peace History Book Award for this accessible, carefully-researched, and richly illustrated book. This volume represents years of research at historical and aviation-related organizations and libraries, as well as interviews with Gentry’s family. Because this is the first Gentry biography, Bower relies heavily on newspaper articles as sources, leaving periods of time unaccounted for. Bower has written three other books related to North Carolina’s lesser-known people, places, and events. Despite its title, this book is not about North Carolina. *Viola Gentry* will be of particular interest to readers interested in women’s aviation history, but this engaging, accessible book should appeal to a general readership. It would be appropriate in high school collections and public and

academic libraries. In addition, Bower performs a first-person costumed narrative for younger audiences.

Linda Jacobson
University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill



**27 Views of Wilmington:
The Port City in Prose & Poetry**

Hillsborough: Eno Publishers, 2015.
205 pp. \$15.95. ISBN 978-0-9896092-3-4.

27 *Views of Wilmington*, with an introduction by local author Celia Rivenbark, is a collection of both prose and poetry selections that detail the history, culture, and people of Wilmington, North Carolina. Specifically, Wilmington is known as a center of the film industry with several popular shows like *One Tree Hill* and the TV show *Matlock* having been filmed nearby. Additionally, Wilmington is the location for several popular tourist attractions such as the *USS North Carolina*, the annual North Carolina Azalea Festival, Fort Fisher, and the popular Cape Fear River waterfront. Besides these facts, Wilmington is the birthplace of popular TV personalities, namely, David Brinkley, Charles Kuralt, and Charlie Daniels. Visitors to Wilmington can also view loggerhead turtles on Wrightsville Beach, take scenic riverboat tours on the Cape Fear River, or enjoy the local nightlife along Front Street or Market Street. Like other cities, Wilmington has overcome some unrest during its historical development. Specifically, on November 10, 1898, several local businessmen and the

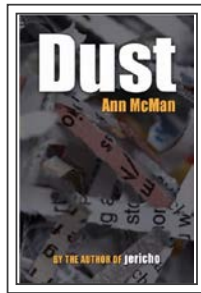
North Carolina “Redeemer” Democratic Party used local armed guards (named “Red Shirts”) to keep black residents from voting. Despite some turbulent chapters in its historical development, Wilmington has become in modern times a popular state retirement center.

This book is the final installment of the popular Eno Publishers *27 Views* series. Other titles are as follows: *27 Views of Greensboro*, *27 Views of Charlotte*, *27 Views of Raleigh*, *27 Views of Durham*, *27 Views of Asheville*, *27 Views of Chapel Hill*, and *27 Views of Hillsborough*. In *27 Views of Wilmington*, twenty-seven different authors from the Wilmington area contribute both prose as well as selections of poetry to the compilation, and give their unique perspectives of the Wilmington area. Interestingly, the contributors include UNC-Wilmington faculty in the Creative Writing or Master in Fine Arts Program, Cape Fear Community College faculty, a former UNC-Wilmington Chancellor, the widow of the co-pilot for *United Airlines Flight 93*, and a local radio station commentators. Each selection in *27 Views of Wilmington* ends with a short biography of the contributor. The book is divided into specific sections entitled, “A place called home,” “Close-Ups,” “A World Apart,” “Street Scenes,” “Views from before,” “Views from 1898 & beyond,” and “Views in Fiction.” Although the book does not contain any specific illustrations, one illustration on the book’s cover does depict popular Wilmington area landmarks, including Airlie Gardens and the Bellamy Mansion.

Ultimately, *27 Views of Wilmington* offers a glimpse into the daily lives of the “Port City’s” residents. After completing this book, readers can begin to understand the events which have shaped Wilmington’s past and which may serve a valuable role in its future. Because of its specific scope and subject matter, *27 Views of Wilmington* would be suitable

for inclusion in a public or academic library with a local history focus.

David W. Young
University of North Carolina at Pembroke



Dust

By Ann McMan.
Fairfield, CA: Nuance : Bedazzled Ink Publishing Company, 2011.
252 pp. \$14.95. ISBN 978-1-9344-5273-8.

Dust is a fast-paced, plot-driven tale of political intrigue centered on Evan (Evangeline) Reed, a woman who professionally digs up dirt on politicians. Evan is asked to vet an irreproachable, environmentalist state senator whose political party sees him as a promising presidential candidate for the next election cycle. Evan gets more than she bargained for when she investigates Senator Andy Townsend in this mystery/thriller, including murder, aliases, affairs, and unlikely alliances. No twist is more surprising to her than how quickly she falls for the senator’s estranged wife, Julia Donne, a woman who has taken the reins of her family’s successful international publishing firm.

This third person narrative with multiple perspectives predominantly trails Evan Reed between her home in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, to Julia’s home of New York City with side trips across all parts of the United States (Colorado, Delaware, Florida, and Washington, D.C.) and even across the pond to London.

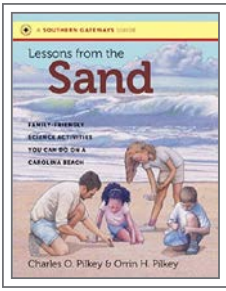
Wrapping up in just over 250 pages, I longed for a bit more development and background for her compelling cast of characters, including her

childhood best friend, Father Tim, her teenage daughter, Stevie, and the two men who handed her the Townsend job, one of whom is Stevie’s cantankerous father. Evan herself is fairly well fleshed out. She’s an expert in her profession—smart, able to easily tease out details as she interrogates, and a savvy researcher to boot. Librarians, in fact, may quite enjoy that the story kicks off with her conducting research at the Library of Congress. Evan’s personal life is more of a disaster as she is easily emotionally frazzled and prone to bouts of cursing. Also, much of Evan’s romantic entanglement with Julia is implied, rather than directly conveyed to the reader.

Written in 2011, *Dust* is the second novel of award-winning author, librarian and North Carolina resident, Ann McMan, that followed up her highly praised book, *Jericho*. For her lesbian literary fiction and mysteries, Ms. McMan has been awarded the Alice B. Lavender Certificate, a Rainbow Award, a Golden Crown Literary Society award, and been elected to the The Royal Academy of Bards Hall of Fame. *Dust* was published by the independent press, Bedazzled Ink Publishing, which is “dedicated to literary fiction, nonfiction, and children’s books that celebrate the unique and under-represented voices of women.”

Dust is recommended for collections of North Carolina authors, LGBT authors, adult mystery/thriller, literary fiction and/or LGBT protagonists. Great addition, along with McMan’s other work, to public, school and academic adult or YA collections, though, perhaps best suited to older teens due to profanity and brief violence.

Kristan Shawgo
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill



Lessons from the Sand: Family-Friendly Science Activities You Can Do on a Carolina Beach

By Charles O. Pilkey and Orrin H. Pilkey.
Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,
2016. 221 pp. \$19. ISBN 978-1-4696-2737-3.

Anyone who has ever done research on the ecology, geology, or politics of the North Carolina coastline has probably encountered Dr. Orrin H. Pilkey's research. Dr. Pilkey, Professor Emeritus of Geology at Duke University (and Founder and Director Emeritus of the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines), has for decades challenged the effectiveness of beach nourishment, jetties, and seawalls in combatting beach erosion, asserting that humans can neither accurately predict nor permanently change the effect of wind and wave on shorelines.

Lessons from the Sand contains forty-one hands-on activities developed by Orrin and his son Charles to raise awareness of the forces that shape North and South Carolina beaches and the organisms that inhabit them. Photographs and maps supplement the warm colored-pencil illustrations provided by Charles, an artist and sculptor. Each activity is prefaced with a literary quote, reinforcing the connection between art and science.

The first chapters in the book consider the characteristics of waves and erosion and then move on to the nature of sand, shells, plants, and animals. Other chapters discuss the human impact on the environment and provide rainy day alternatives to the outdoor activities.

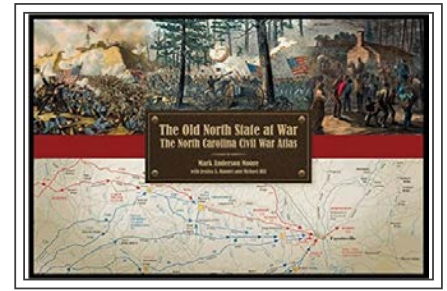
Most families will already have all the required equipment (trowel, plastic bags, magnifying glass, etc.) to conduct the experiments. A hydrometer is the only unusual item, and this can be purchased for about \$10 wherever aquarium supplies are sold. A microscope can add a different perspective, but is certainly not essential.

The book is geared towards elementary and middle school students, but beachgoers of all ages will find activities that both satisfy and stimulate their curiosity. The introduction includes a disclaimer that the book is not a field guide, but the text and illustrations should be able to answer most beachgoers' "What is that?" questions related to sand, shells, wildlife, and plants. Readers looking for a more in-depth scientific study of coastal dynamics (without the hands-on experiments) might want to consider the senior Pilkey's book *How to Read a North Carolina Beach* (UNC Press, 2004).

The book is not an overt forum for Pilkey's views, and most readers (or at least the ones who don't have an expensive beach house in danger of collapsing into the ocean during the next hurricane) will find his delivery and thought-provoking questions balanced. Vacationers who read the book without moving off their beach rental's deck will still be enlightened by the content and challenged by the questions. If the authors are successful in their ambitions, both children and their parents will come to understand that beaches are not simply piles of sand next to salt water, but vibrant, ever-changing ecosystems.

Recommended for public libraries, school media centers, homeschoolers, and every beach rental house from Corolla to Dafuskie Island.

Arleen Fields
Methodist University



The Old North State at War: the North Carolina Civil War atlas

By Mark Anderson Moore.
Raleigh, N. C. Department of Cultural Resources,
2015. 190pp., illustrations, maps, portraits.

North Carolina has long needed an atlas that graphically shows the imprint that the American civil war made on the entire state. Individual battles such as the one for Fort Fisher can be studied through appropriate mapping found on monographs on the battle, but viewing the war in its entirety in a single volume has never been possible up until now. With the sesquicentennial coming in 2010, the North Carolina Division of Archives and History began almost ten years ago looking for a way to commemorate this event. A committee was formed in 2004 by Deputy Director Jeffrey J. Crow to plan for this atlas. *The Old North State at War* is the outstanding result of that effort. Written by Mark Anderson Moore with the help of Jessica Bandel and Michael Hill, the atlas contains ninety-nine highly detailed large scale maps of significant civil war locations. Mark Anderson Moore, the primary author for the project, was an IT specialist with the North Carolina Office of Archives and History and currently focuses on his work as an author and mapmaker. Jessica Bandel works for the North Carolina Office of Archives and History researching Civil War battles and creating educational smartphone content. Michael Hill is Supervisor of Historical Research for the Office of Archives and History.

The scholarship for the atlas is outstanding. Many of these large scale maps are accompanied by civil war era illustrative materials. The content of the maps and illustrations are simply amazing. This reviewer was particularly impressed by the illustration of the “powder vessel” USS Louisiana used in the Union attack on Fort Fisher in December of 1864. An illustration of this vessel has never before been seen, and we see that the design of the vessel conveys the method of attack in a way that mesmerizes the reader. Similarly the Sawyer Obstructions on Cape Fear River come alive in an illustration/map of the Confederate river defenses of the area. Many of the maps of the Eastern and Western theatre of the war were previously available only via Confederate and Union originals. The maps of these areas enlighten readers as to the entire scope of the war in the state, while other treatments of the war tend to focus only on the major battles. The maps on the Battle of Plymouth and the Albemarle Sound area show events that were only available before in small scale illustrations. Not only are battles and skirmishes shown in maps, but topics such as the Bread Riots of 1864, the Freedman’s Colony of Roanoke Island, the Confederate prison at Salisbury, Thomas’ Legion of Cherokee troops, the massacre of Unionists at Shelton Laurel, and an essay on Parker Robbins lend an outlook to the war that most North Carolinians have not yet heard. The depiction of other lost episodes such as numerous Federal atrocities in the Western part of North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee during the war also add depth to the work. The atlas also includes full page biographies of important personalities such as: James I. Waddell, John Newland Moffitt, and Ambrose E. Burnside. Tables, such as a list of military installations in North Carolina 1861-62, total war death by

county, prices of market goods 1861-1865, Union Enlistments by date 1862-1865, and county by county returns for President and Governor, also make this volume highly useful to our understanding of the conflict.

Archival sources and newspaper accounts of the period were consulted for the atlas, and this resulted in the creation of a number of important data bases on the period. Confederate maps drawn by James Francis Gilmer for example were related against the earliest state county highway road maps and then matched to modern GIS mapping to create accurate and up to date mapping of illustrated areas. Online digital resources such as the National Archives and ancestry.com were consulted for background letters and information. Collecting this type of background information enabled the authors to create a significant publication on the Civil War in North Carolina. The volume is in an attractive format and makes use of appropriate coloring that is both easy to read and pleasing to the eye. Many map publications in the age of GPS are produced using the cheapest design possible, leading to difficult-to-read mapping. This work will stand as a model for how to produce clear and easy to read maps. The text of the book is both informative and concise in presentation. Page layout is very well done and makes traveling through the book (It is arranged in a chronological order) easy and comfortable for the reader. The binding is very sturdy and uses a good quality buckram that will stand up over time. The jacket layout is very attractive and conveys an accurate account of the type of material contained in the book.

This book will stand as a model of what state-specific depictions of a civil war atlas should look like. K-12 schools as well as university libraries will find the atlas useful in classroom situations. *The Old North State at War: the North*

Carolina Civil War Atlas is a unique resource for the citizens of North Carolina and the nation. Overall the accounts given in the book are accurate and from original sources where possible. It is unfortunate that space limits the treatment of some accounts. For example this reviewer would like to have seen a more graphic account of the assaults on the women at the Shelton Laurel massacre, but this is a book for a general audience and we will have to be content with descriptions of the murders of the men. Adding the women would have added a gender-based view and broadened the horror of the attack.

Ralph Scott
East Carolina University



Fate Moreland's Widow

By John Lane.
Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press,
2015. 184 pp. \$24.95. ISBN 978-1-61117-469-4.

In his foreword, Wiley Cash places the time and setting for John Lane’s novel *Fate Moreland’s Widow* and provides a glimpse into the perspectives of the main character, Ben Crocker. Crocker, son of a mill worker, is a man caught in the middle in his new somewhat isolated position as the right hand man of his boss, a wealthy textile mill owner. George McCain, Jr., the current mill owner in a long family line of privilege, has little concern for those he employs, including Ben Crocker’s friends and family, beyond how productive they can be in the textile mill.

In the mid-1930s, mill workers were engaged in labor strikes across the

country attempting to organize unions to enhance their bargaining power and improve working conditions. Mill owners like McCain were highly resistant. Crocker, from a mill-working family, now finds himself to be a “company man” at odds with all he has held dear, particularly the organization of unions. Further he is forced to act on his boss’s behalf in laying off workers, targeting those engaged in labor union efforts, and removing them from their mill-owned homes, generally finding himself burdened by the resulting moral and ethical conflicts. As the story unfolds, mill owner McCain becomes embroiled in a legal dispute, charged with murder for recklessly causing an accident that resulted in the drowning of Fate Moreland, his young son, and another person on the local lake property owned by the McCain mill family. The Morelands represent all that the McCains do not. They are seen as hard-working, caring members of the community as opposed to the McCain family with their wealth and disregard for the common man. There are also tantalizing hints of the involvement of George’s despised older brother Angus in this tragedy, leaving readers to wonder who really caused this accident, but these questions are not advanced.

Crocker, however, is called upon to serve, once again, the best interests of his boss. These include paying off the widow of Fate Moreland and others. In the process of this unethical involvement, Crocker’s feelings are complicated by his increasing infatuation with the young widow. Even so Crocker holds true to his status as a “company man,” squelching his personal feelings and doing what he has to do.

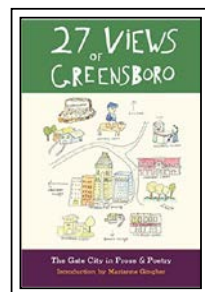
It is in the latter part of life, with time to reflect, that he continues to be burdened by how he allowed himself to be used in the quest for his own personal success. Crocker questions the value of what he did and whether or not he actu-

ally helped to improve anyone’s life.

In *Fate Moreland’s Widow*, John Lane skillfully shares historical fact, local drama, and unanswered questions. Perhaps Lane is planning a sequel to answer some of these questions, especially in regard to the older McCain brother.

This book is recommended for anyone interested in historical fiction from the southern region. There is clear evidence of the inequities of social class and family status that readers may find interesting, particularly as related to a pre-modern rural southern setting. Public and academic libraries that collect North Carolina or South Carolina history or literature should definitely have John Lane’s *Fate Moreland’s Widow* in their collections. High school libraries may wish to acquire this book as well.

Kaye Dotson
East Carolina University



**27 Views of Greensboro:
The Gate City in Prose & Poetry**

Hillsborough, NC: Eno Publishers, 2015.
193 pp. \$15.95. ISBN 978-0-9896-0921-0.

Did you know that Greensboro was the Atlanta airport of the railroad era? So many railroad lines went through it that you couldn’t get anywhere without going through Greensboro along the way. The latest in a series of books on different North Carolina cities, *27 Views of Greensboro*, is rich in historical tidbits and personal reminiscences of the city. Most of the selections are essays, with a handful of poems and a single short

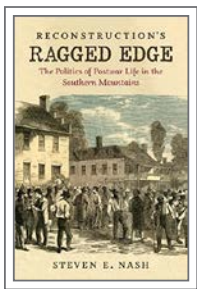
story, and contributors include journalists, professors, poets, novelists, and other writers. Together, they make up a portrait of the city’s past and present.

Many of the selections can be divided into two categories: those of Greensboro natives and those of residents who found a home there later in life. Of the former category, one of the most moving essays is Allen Johnson’s “Our House Has Two Stories,” where he describes his black family moving into a formerly white neighborhood in the late 1960s. The couple they bought their house from were kind and gracious, and yet were undoubtedly part of an epidemic of white flight. Decades later, Johnson met the family’s son, near his own age, who confesses his guilt at the actions of his parents. Among several other stories of segregation and the civil rights era is Linda Beatrice Brown’s “A Nice Nasty Town.” Brown describes Greensboro as a city that maintained a veneer of being more liberal and less segregated than other parts of the South, until the 1960 Woolworth lunch counter sit-ins opened up Greensboro’s internal discontent to the rest of the world.

Of the essays by writers who have adopted Greensboro as their hometown, Tina Firesheets’s opening sentence, “I hadn’t intended to stay here,” sums up the theme of many. In “Sayf,” Diya Abdo writes of being forced to leave her native Jordan for a job at Guilford College after her academic work is deemed inappropriate for an Islamic university. Though she considers herself a city woman who will never be comfortable in a small place like Greensboro, she finds an unexpected home there. In “On a Rocky Inland Coast,” Lee Zacharias describes ending up at UNCG more or less by accident and feeling certain that she’d never stay past the first year. Despite the initial strikes against Greensboro (an overly suburban feel and lack of mountains), she is still there almost forty years later.

The 27 selections (plus an introduction by Marianne Gingham) approach Greensboro from a number of different angles—personal or historical, prose or poetry, humorous or serious—and they come together to create a whole that will be interesting to both the Greensboro resident and the outsider who wants to learn more about a different part of the state. It is recommended for libraries in the Greensboro area, and for libraries elsewhere in the state that collect North Caroliniana.

Michelle Cronquist
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



***Reconstruction's Ragged Edge:
The Politics of Postwar Life in the
Southern Mountains***

By Steven E. Nash.
Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016.
1988. 288 pp. \$39.95. ISBN 978-1-4696-2624-6.

The perception that the mountain South was a Unionist stronghold during the Civil War, and displayed a more egalitarian spirit after the war, has been an enduring one. Built largely on the assumption that a lack of plantation culture led to a relatively small slave population and therefore less robust support for the institution of slavery, and coupled with the independence of spirit thought necessary to carve a living out of relatively difficult circumstances, this belief has remained fixed, though never unchallenged, in the narrative of the Civil War and the postbellum period.

Historian Steven Nash, in his excellent and nuanced study, provides yet

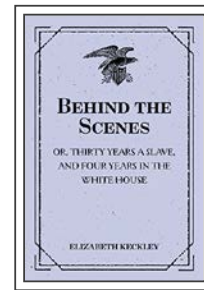
more evidence that the North Carolina mountains were of a piece with the state and the region, and that the assumption of egalitarianism was no more evident in the this part of North Carolina than anywhere else, though it differed in the types of occupations and infrastructure needs that the region's geography imposed. Through six chronological chapters, covering the antebellum period through about 1880, plus a detailed introduction and conclusion, Nash carefully builds up a detailed picture of these needs, as well as the political and social forces that sought to either meet or exploit them. Individual cases, culled from primary sources such as letters, diaries, Freedman's Bureau files, and contemporary newspapers, create a compelling picture of an area as hard hit as any other by the war and its aftermath, and additionally handicapped by difficult terrain and relative lack of political clout in a state still seemingly dominated by eastern elites. Nash details the relative powerlessness of the newly enfranchised, who, enabled by the support and active intervention of Federal troops and Freedmen's agents, benefited for a time from the broader representation that national policies and new political alliances had made possible. These same contemporary accounts, however, give greater evidence of the strong, sometimes violent, and ultimately successful conservative backlash which reversed these tenuous gains.

Some may find the work to be a difficult read, though this will have nothing to do with the quality of the book nor the persuasiveness of Nash's contentions. True, Nash's book, while lucidly argued and impressively sourced, is not aimed at a general readership. More than this, though, one must concede that Nash's picture of the Reconstruction period, particularly as it illustrates the general conditions and treatment of the newly freed African American population, does not show the United States at its best,

though occasional glimpses of nobility of purpose and a quest for true equality do indeed shine through, and the author is at pains to bring such instances to the foreground. Nevertheless, to read of injustice and inhumanity, even if couched in sturdy academic prose, and surrounded by a welter of painstakingly gathered statistics and detailed notes, cannot help but leave the reader dispirited, though always more fully informed.

Recommended for academic libraries and libraries with strong history collections.

Steven Case
State Library of North Carolina



***Behind the Scenes:
Or, Thirty Years a Slave and
Four Years in the White House***

By Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley.
Hillsborough, NC: ENO Publishers, 2016.
161 pp. \$10.00. ISBN 978-0-9896092-7-2.

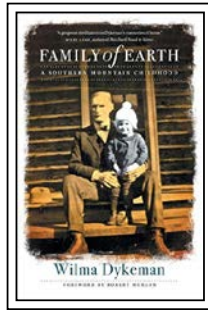
First published in 1868, this is Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley's candid account of her life prior to purchasing her own freedom, and later, of her four years of service as a seamstress in the White House. Keckley spent several cruel years as a young adult slave in North Carolina's Hillsborough before she was moved to Virginia to continue life as a slave. She later purchased her own freedom and then her son's freedom. Her talents and skilled fingers provided an income and earned Elizabeth some renown as a dressmaker. She was called upon by all the best ladies of St. Louis where she was then living.

This narrative provides a view into the real lives of the Abraham Lincoln family, particularly that of Mary Todd Lincoln for whom Keckley served as personal dressmaker. This reality of larger than life persons such as members of presidential families can be difficult to find even in the biographies and fiction that are often written about them. Keckley's account, however, shows the anxieties, frustrations, and emotions many biographies fail to expose. Mary Todd Lincoln, wife and widow of Abraham Lincoln, becomes an ordinary wife and mother for readers through the eyes of Keckley. Her dependence on Keckley and the bond of their friendship transcended the mores and social strata of the time. Their relationship was perhaps viewed as too close, and too interwoven, as is evidenced by the family's efforts to squelch this publication, and the resulting severing of ties between Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. Keckley. This narrative is both informative and humanizing, giving readers an intimate view of a very difficult time in the life of one of America's revered First Ladies. Historians may be grateful that this volume was not hidden from the public eye.

Readers will further appreciate the introduction by Dolen Perkins-Valdez as he served a similar role as Keckley in that he gave greater substance to Keckley than she gave to herself, much as Keckley did for Mary Todd Lincoln.

This book is recommended for historians and biographers interested in the Civil War and presidential families. Public and academic libraries should definitely have *Behind the Scenes: Or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House* in their collections. High school libraries may wish to acquire this book as well.

Kaye Dotson
East Carolina University



Family of Earth: A Southern Mountain Childhood

By Wilma Dykeman.
 Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,
 2016. 208 pp. \$18.00. ISBN 978-04696-2914-8.

Autobiography can often be seen as simultaneously selfish and selfless. Chronicling one's own life, at least with the idea that others will be interested enough to read about it, smacks of profound egotism and eagerness to be scrutinized, even as it speaks to an equally profound willingness to stand exposed and defenseless before that scrutiny. Yet, beyond this undoubted dichotomy, one may find a different view, where a single life examined may, in the right hands, expose and illuminate larger truths.

Such is the case with *Family of Earth: a Southern Mountain Childhood*, a moving and deeply felt memoir by Wilma Dykeman detailing the first 14 years of her life. Written when she was only in her mid-20s, and only found and published after her death, Dykeman's story of her own childhood in the North Carolina mountains in and around Buncombe County reveals a time and a world that are, if not vanished, at least elusive and largely unattainable for modern readers—even those for whom the mountains are home. Following a generous and heartfelt introduction by Robert Morgan, the author unveils both her own impressions of the world as she grew up, and the moral and spiritual lessons that life in the mountains taught to her. No Pollyanna, Dykeman unflinchingly examines the struggles of

daily living in the mountain south, a life which was, if not exactly hardscrabble, certainly attenuated and circumscribed by the prevailing economic conditions. But whereas it might be trite in the hands of other writers to contrast the relative lack of material riches with the richness of life, and especially nature, in her surroundings, Dykeman's luminous and finely wrought prose creates no such feeling of cliché, and her story makes it clear that no such contrast existed for her. Her childhood was neither free from want nor free from grief—and indeed, the memoir ends with the death of her father, which essentially represented the death of her childhood—but there is throughout an underlying sense of amazement and gratitude for the environment in which she grew and matured.

Given that the text was written so early in her career, the reader will not be surprised to find that, even as Dykeman the memoirist sought to unblinkingly convey the sorrows and joys of a young life, Dykeman the budding author was exploring the power of words, seeking their expressive potentiality and their richness as a medium with which to both immerse readers in her individual experience, and to teach them the greatness of the world around them. In her later works of both fiction and non-fiction, Dykeman explored this world more fully, and this memoir makes manifest the imaginative wellspring from which she drew her inspiration.

Recommended for all libraries, and highly recommended for middle and high school media centers.

Steven Case
State Library of North Carolina