

In Our Own Back Yard: Review of Nonprint Sources on North Carolina Authors

by Helen Fowler Kluttz

My fellow fanatics for writing of and about North Carolina will be delighted to know that video, the Internet, and even maps have much to offer. These alternative sources are enhancements to what is available in print.

Maps:

North Carolina English Teachers' Association. *A Literary Map of North Carolina*. 1972. [Out of print, but often available at rare and used book dealers]

The authors are listed below the map, which bears illustrations related to the literature produced in the state. Near Asheville, for example, there is an angel pointing upward to represent Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward Angel*. The listing of authors gives their birthplaces and a letter indicating the genre worked in and any state awards received.

Malone's *New Literary Map of North Carolina*. Chapel Hill: Literary Lantern Press, 1990. Available from: North Carolina English Teachers' Association, P. O. Box 4009, Charlotte, NC 28204; or: Literary Lantern Press, 516 Carl Drive, Chapel Hill, NC 27516.

Currently endorsed by the North Carolina English Teachers' Association, this map has several improvements over the 1972 map. This map has more political and geographic features: for instance, the counties are marked on it. Also, the map is laminated, which makes it more durable. Best of all, the authors' names are placed on the map so that one may tell at a glance which counties are well-bestowed with writers and which are not. The Research Triangle Park area has the lion's share while Montgomery County has none.

Fiction:

Pete and Shirley: The Great Tar Heel Novel. Serialized by *The News and Observer*. Friday, November 17, 1995. Internet. Accessed 2/20/97. <http://www4.nando.net/nao/pete/toc.htm>

This serial novel has 17 chapters by 16 different writers, all culled from the Research Triangle Park area, "with more fine writers per square foot than anywhere else in the United States," claims David Perkins, book editor for *The News and Observer of Raleigh*. Perkins organized the

undertaking, getting Clyde Edgerton to write the first and last chapters. As Perkins notes, "*Pete and Shirley* is pure fun." The novel pokes fun at everything from country music, as Edgerton readers have grown to expect, to writers' conferences and assertiveness training for women.

The real fun is to see how the baton of satire is passed from one chapter to the next and to see how various threads are woven in and out of the narrative. The trouble starts when Shirley discovers a briefcase in a box of clothing she purchased for Pete at a yard sale. The briefcase turns out to be a Pandora's box of secrets from the past that tests the relationship between Pete and Shirley.

Cities and Roads Stories. Internet. Accessed 7/23/97. <http://www.shopthenet.net/poetcorner/cities/summary.html>

This site can be accessed by using the keywords "Cities and Roads — Story Descriptions." Gathered here is a roster of stories published in a periodical titled *Cities and Roads: A Collection of Short Stories for Triad Readers and Writers*, edited by Tom Kealy and published in Greensboro by Lee Booth and Battleground Printing and Publishing. The first issue came out in fall 1995.

This periodical is one to watch, as it publishes stories by previously unpublished writers as well as experienced writers. One limitation is that it takes stories only from Triad residents; but with the help of the Internet site, it may reach beyond the Triad audience and thereby broaden its net for contributors. The site showcases the short story talents in the magazine with a one-sentence synopsis of each story, followed by a brief yet intriguing excerpt, vigorous enough to leave the reader wanting more. And there is more. One or two stories from each of the four issues included in the site can be accessed in full.

Commentary on the Literary Scene:

"Women and Literary Publishing in North Carolina." Part of *Making the Difference: North Carolina Women Writers and Their Works*. Internet. Accessed 2/20/97. <http://odyssey.lib.duke.edu/women/ncwwpub.html>

This document lists findings on how women have worked "behind the literary scene" via organizations, periodicals, and publishing ventures to help bring North Carolina literature to the public's attention. These descriptions provide a brief synopsis of women's contributions to the state's literary activity from 1854 to the present.

Rubin, Louis D., Jr. "On the New North Carolina Writers." *Frank 15 Online. Region: North Carolina*. Anglophone S. A. and Gyoza Media. 1996 Webmaster. Internet. Accessed 2/20/97. <http://gyoza.com/frank/html/19Rubin.html>

Rubin ruminates on the causes of the "literary explosion" taking place in North Carolina during the last fifteen years. He notes that most of the writers receiving widespread attention are those who grew up in rural communities or small towns, but moved away to university towns and cities. He speculates that the writers see their former communities through the new lens of a different cultural perspective, and are moved to preserve the special character of the places they came from.

Survey:

Their Native Earth: A Celebration of North Carolina Literature. Raleigh: Humanities Extension Program, North Carolina State University, and University of North Carolina Center for Public Television, 1989. [Aired on WUNG-TV, Channel 58, Concord-Charlotte.] Available from: Humanities Extension Publications, North Carolina State University, Box 8101, Raleigh, NC 27695. Cost: \$125.

This two-part (111 minutes) documentary traces the emergence of a literary culture in the state, moving from the literary forefathers, Paul Greene (famous for the outdoor drama *The Lost Colony*) in the east and Thomas Wolfe in the west, to the present day. Contemporary writers are interviewed and read from their works. Fred Chappell, Reynolds Price, and A. R. Ammons read from their poetry. Unfortunately, while the poets are reading their selections, the mushy background music drones on, clashing with the rhythms and emotional overtones of the language. The indiscretions with the music, however, are redeemed by the immediacy of the visits with contemporary writers in their own back yards (or on the grounds of the college campuses where they work) and the opportunity to witness the paths they took to get into writing

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