

## New North Carolina Books

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LOUISE HOWE BAILEY. *Go Home Wi' Me.* (Asheville: Groves Printing Company, 1974). 114 pp. Drawing by Joseph P. Bailey, Jr. and William H. Bailey. Order from the author, Box 241, Flat Rock, N.C. 28731.

This privately printed volume is a collection of short observations of the "old days" of the people of the North Carolina mountains. In these stories the author files a quiet but determined protest against change. Her accounts are sometimes warm and amusing, but many are tinged with sadness and regret for the passing of an era. Ms. Howe doesn't much like the twentieth century and what it is doing to mountain people. She memorializes such "old ways" as hard work, simplicity, self reliance, kindness, Godliness, neighborliness, sense of place, faith, trust and paternal authority. There is a nostalgia here for the "old days when everybody was good." But should we not also remember that the "old ways" included selfishness, cruelty, superstition, nativism, poverty, greed, and disrespect for law. Whether for good or bad, mountain culture continues to change. This little book will help us remember how mountain people used to be.

PAUL R. CLANCY. *Just A Country Lawyer: A Biography of Senator Sam Ervin.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974.) Photographs, index. \$8.50. Available in most book stores.

What kind of public servant is Sam Ervin of North Carolina? Is he a Southern segregationist who, during a long senatorial career, used the Constitution, homely nostrums, the Bible, Shakespeare, and all available varieties of snake-oil to obstruct progressive change? Or is he a genuine folk-hero, admired by simple folk, jet-set liberals, and Oxford scholars, who defended the rights of the people against military and bureaucratic snooping and played the key role in bringing the Nixon administration to its well deserved rewards? Paul R. Clancy, Washington correspondent of the *CHARLOTTE OBSERVER*, takes a beginning step toward the reconciliation of these contradictions in this biography.

Both views are, of course, partially valid because Sam Ervin is an American politician. But both are misleading unless examined together. The view of Ervin as a conservative obstructionist would have probably prevailed had not his Watergate

role pushed him into the limelight and given him the opportunity to lecture the country on the subject of personal morality and constitutional purities. This would have been the case, in my judgment, because history will show that Ervin's role in delaying and defeating progressive legislation was crucial. Government snooping, particularly that conducted by the Army, was not nearly as widespread as Ervin led us to believe.

Clancy deals fairly with the contradictions of Ervin's senatorial career. His research is thorough. However, it stops short of any careful examination of Ervin's actions from the point of view of constitutional law. His treatment is as objective as it could be at this point. But, in my judgment, much remains to be said about the historic consequences of Ervin's career in the Senate. For example, where would we be today as a nation if Ervin's view of the Constitution, rather than the view of the Warren Court, had prevailed in the last two decades? What would be the status of American civil rights, particularly those of black Americans, if Ervin's view of the Tenth Amendment and states rights was the law of the land?

This biography is a good one, and it should be read by everyone interested in the relationship between Southern culture and Congressional politics. It is a highly sympathetic character portrait of Ervin the man, and it wisely refrains from any effort to assign Ervin his rightful place in the history of American politics. But these judgments must eventually be made. And they should be made by objective scholars sensitive to the crucial relationships between politics, constitutional law, and social change.

ROBERT E. LEE. *Blackbeard The Pirate: A Reappraisal of His Life and Times*. (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, Publisher, 1974.) 264 pp. \$8.95.

Edward Teach, commonly known as Blackbeard, is remembered as one of the great villains of early American history. Much romanticized, he has been portrayed as a blood thirsty rogue who had his way with ships, grog, women and other people's property. Finally, so the story goes, he was tracked to his lair and put to the sword by the law abiding citizens of Virginia who could stand no more from this North Carolina brigand.

This myth of Blackbeard is put to rest by this scholarly account by Robert E. Lee, Professor of Law at Wake Forest University. Lee's research is exhaustive, his documentation complete, and his speculative conclusions drawn with care. Lee's profession as a legal scholar gives this book an important and special dimension. His knowledge of admiralty law enables him to discuss Teach's seizure of ships, the trials of pirates, and the distribution of salvaged property within the legal structures of the period. As a lawyer, his judgment about the legality of Virginia Governor Spotswood's expedition against Blackbeard is of particular interest and importance. Indeed, his conclusion on this point raises a historic question: "Who was the real pirate, Blackbeard or Governor Spotswood?"

Lee's account is an examination of Blackbeard's alleged crimes within the political, social, legal and moral framework of the early 18th century. When judged by the standards of his own day, Edward Teach seems to be a much less villainous character than history has held him to be. Yet, his fate seemed to be preordained. As predicted in a play presented on board Teach's ship by a member of his crew:

Know'st thou that Death attends  
thy mighty crimes,  
And thou shall'st hang tomorrow  
morn betimes,

Teach escaped the gallows, but he lost his head after receiving five pistol wounds and twenty gashes from the sword.

The only weakness of the book is the absence of charts and maps.

HEATHER ROSS MILLER. *A Spiritual Divorce*. (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, Publisher, 1974.) Available in most book stores. \$6.95.

Heather Ross Miller, a novelist and poet, is well known to North Carolina readers. Her two prize-winning novels, *The Edge of the Woods* and *Tenants of the House*, were warmly received and her standing as a lecturer, teacher, and poet continues to rise.

*A Spiritual Divorce* is a collection of short stories, many of which have appeared earlier in other publications. Miller's understanding of the culture and people of the Southern Piedmont, so evident in her novels, continues here in the more difficult genre of the short story. In the novel there is time and space for the slow and careful development of characters. In the short story this must be done almost immediately in a few paragraphs. Where many novelists fail to make the transition to the short story, Ms. Miller succeeds admirably. Through the skillful use of words, careful selection of just the right expression, or the inclusion of the most pointed cultural artifact, Miller's characters spring full-born from one or two paragraphs. For example, we understand the character of Uncle Buck immediately when we learn that "he hated family gatherings, family reunions, picnics, weddings, funerals, even Sunday afternoons." In another story Miller shows us the conflict between modern culture and rural habits in the Pee Dee River country in the life of a family that owns a red sports car, but keeps a slop-bucket in the kitchen . . . where the potato peelings float brown side up.

Ms. Miller grew up in the shadows of the Uwharrie Mountains, and she has returned there, as a creative artist, to mint the rich human and cultural lodes of this

area of North Carolina. She writes of simple, human things, the ordinary existence of ordinary people who clamber after, but resist at the same time, the changes of the modern world. If an over used and much abused expression can be forgiven, Ms. Miller's stories reveal a strong sense of place, a close communion with the people about whom she writes. She writes stories with the eye and pen of a poet.

ALGIE I. NEWLIN. *The Battle of Lindley's Mill*. (Burlington: The Alamance Historical Association, 1975.) 30 pp. Maps. Order from the publisher or the Guilford College Library. \$2.00.

The Battle of Lindley's Mill was the final clash of the American Revolution in North Carolina. This short essay is the first study of this event since 1854. It will remind North Carolinians of several important features of the almost forgotten episode in the American struggle against the British Crown.

The author is Emeritus Professor of History at Guilford College. He was born within one mile of the battle site and has had close contact with relatives and friends whose immediate ancestors lived during the time of the conflict. Thus, the story has a strong personal element. Indeed, it reads almost like an eye-witness account. Professor Newlin's research is careful and thorough. His close attention to the geography of the area clears up certain misinterpretations about the movements of the opposing armies that have remained unchallenged for too long.

Several points are made that deserve special attention. First, the Battle of Lindley's Mill was mainly a fight between neighbors. American Whigs and Tories killed each other with the ferocity of modern day television drama. Second, the Tory commander threatened to massacre his prisoners if the Whigs attempted to free them. Thus, the threat to do murder is not a new tactic among armed Americans.

Third, you can lose a battle, but win the war. The Whigs failed to free the prisoners who were marched off to Wilmington by their captors, but, from that point on the Whigs retained full control of the territory. Finally, care of the wounded by Quaker families in the vicinity was administered without regard to the political allegiance of those in need.

*The Battle of Lindley's Mill* is a valuable contribution to North Carolina History. It will be the definitive study of this small but important conflict in the back-waters of the American Revolution.

CHARLES RICHARD SANDERS. *The Cameron Plantation in Central North Carolina And Its Founder Richard Bennehan*. (Durham: The Seeman Printery, 1974.) \$11.00. Illustrations, maps. Order from the author, 103 Pinecrest Road, Durham, N.C. 27705.

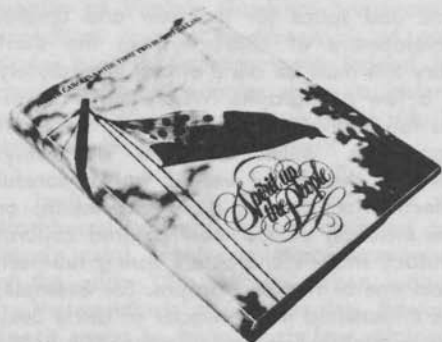
This is an unusual book. It is the story of two prominent North Carolina families, the Camerons and the Bennehans. However, it is more than a genealogical work. It is an account of the building of the plantation system in central North Carolina near the headwaters of the Neuse River. Covering a long span of years, it traces the acquisition of land, slaves, wealth, social standing and political prominence of two families from 1776 until 1973. The author is Professor Emeritus of English at Duke University. He is a distinguished scholar and author of numerous works of biography. The photographs of John Menapace, Duncan S. Heron, Jr., and Charles H. Cooper are clear and vivid, adding immensely to the value of the book.

MARIE VOGT. *Jill And The Nutcracker Ballet*. (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, Publisher, 1974.) 103 pp. Illustrations, \$5.95.

One of the many joys of parenthood is to have a ten year old daughter in Ballet

School. To watch her trip off to class — bouncing ponytail, pink shoes, and black tights — is to witness one of the rare examples of feminine beauty, innocence, and charm remaining in our homogenized teenage culture. Overwhelmed by the foul rock music of our time, we should take advantage of any experience which will interest our children in music of lasting value. This book attempts to do this by introducing children to the magic of the Nutcracker Ballet. It is the story of two little girls who are students at the Cambrose Ballet School. They tryout for parts in the annual presentation of the Nutcracker Ballet. The story describes their delight in winning roles, the excitement of rehearsals, the anxious moments of opening night, and a surprise ending. My ten year old daughter read the story and said, "It's great, will you bring me another one?"

Ms. Vogt is Director of the Toledo (Ohio) Ballet and the Toledo Ballet School.



#### SPIRIT UP THE PEOPLE

North Carolina: The First Two Hundred Years  
by Taylor Lewis, Jr., and Joanne Young

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