

New North Carolina Books

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MOSES ROUNTREE. *Henry Belk: Son of Sweet Union.* (Durham: Moore Publishing Company, 1975).

Henry Belk was a good man who lived his life in a small place. He was editor of the *GOLDSBORO NEWS* and the *GOLDSBORO NEWS-ARGUS* from 1926 until 1968. His "column" appeared regularly in newspapers across the state during this long span of years. Eventually, Belk was recognized by his colleagues as one of the great figures of North Carolina journalism. He was friend of everyone, statesmen, politicians, educators, ministers, and the ordinary folks around the state. They appreciated the wisdom, humor, and good will that shaped his opinions about local, state, and national affairs.

Belk was a native of Monroe, "a son of Sweet Union." His nostalgia for "Court House Square," "Goose Creek," and the "Land of the Waxhaws" became an important part of his public image and contributed, as such fantasies always seem to do, to the public appreciation of his humanness. Life was not easy for Henry Belk. He suffered all his life with partial blindness and accepted the premature death of his only child without bitterness or loss of optimism.

This book is more of a fond reminiscence than a standard biography. It suffers from too many long quotations, no table of contents, no index, and some confusion in the chronological narrative.

But, this really does not matter much. It is a story about one of North Carolina's most distinguished citizens who went about his life doing good. It belongs in all North Carolina collections.

MANLY WADE WELLMAN. *The Story of Moore County: Two Centuries Of A North Carolina Region.* (Moore County Historical Association, 1974).

As a rule professional writers do not specialize in local or regional history. Such studies are too often done by amateur historians or local enthusiasts who include mountains of information but fall short of acceptable standards in documentation, organization, and writing skills. This volume is a happy exception to that norm. Wellman is a professional writer who has written sixty-six books, many of them dealing with local and regional history. He brings professional experience and a craftsman's tools to a subject which, if improperly done, can be a monumental bore. Such is not the case here. *The Story of Moore County* is not only well documented, it is carefully organized and skillfully written.

Wellman begins with the geology and geography of the region. He then discusses the early settlers, tells the story of the county during the Revolution and the Civil War, and continues the narrative down to present times. It is a lean, thought-

ful approach to local history, and represents the kind of study that should be done about all North Carolina counties — valuable as a source for research but interesting and enjoyable to the lay reader.

ADOLPH L. DIAL and DAVID K. ELIADES.
The Only Land I Know: A History Of The Lumbee Indians. (San Francisco: The Indian Historian Press, 1975).

"How do Lumbee Indians know they are Indian?" This question was asked at Princeton University in a convocation of American Indian scholars sponsored by the American Indian Historical Society in 1970. This book is a carefully documented and eloquently expressed answer to that question. It is a moving story of a mistreated and misunderstood people who have retained their pride in being Indian.

The basic thesis here is that the Lumbee Indians are the descendants of Indians living earlier in what is now Robeson County and the surviving Englishmen of the "Lost Colony" on Roanoke Island. Though the authors use oral history as one source for their account (and they make a good case for the value of oral history), they have examined all existing written sources concerning the origins of the Lumbees. Their argument is compelling, and I doubt that further research on the subject will weaken their case. No other theory explains why the first outsiders who came into contact with these people found them speaking Old English, living in a culture that was essentially English, and using English names.

The book examines all aspects of Lumbee history, from the early days before the white man came with his disease and whiskey, through the traumatic conflicts of the 19th century, to the present day efforts to assure the Lumbees a legitimate place in the affairs of the state and nation. It will also be valuable to the reader interested in the history of Robeson County, the town of Pembroke, and Pembroke State University. *The Only Land I Know* will be the definitive study of the Lumbee Indians

for the foreseeable future. It is a valuable contribution to North Carolina history and should be in every library.

RUTH Y. WETMORE. *First On The Land: The North Carolina Indians.* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, Publisher, 1975).

Movies and television, because of their obsession with dramas about "cowboys and red indians," have distorted the public image of the American Indian. Millions of young Americans grow up believing that the American Indian lived only on the Western plains and rode around on ponies doing mischief to honest, clean-living settlers. They remain essentially ignorant of the Eastern Nations that lived east of the Mississippi from Canada to Florida. Give them a choice between *Drums Along The Mohawk* and *Westward Ho The Wagons* and they will take the latter every time. This is unfortunate, because the Eastern Indians represent an important chapter in the history of early American life.

Ruth Wetmore, Curator of the Indian Museum of the Carolinas at Laurinburg, has written a balanced and informative account of North Carolina Indians. She speculates about Indian life in the pre-history period, discusses the Indian wars that swept across North Carolina, identifies and describes all of the nations and tribes that lived in the state, and, in a most interesting fashion, writes about all aspects of Indian culture in North Carolina. The book includes maps, pictures, charts, bibliography, index, and statistics to assist the reader. *First On The Land* is a valuable work: it is recommended to both high school and college students doing research on North Carolina Indians. It is written in a style that invites readers of all ages.

F. ROY JOHNSON. *Stories Of The Old Cherokees.* (Murfreesboro: Johnson Publishing Company, 1975).

Do you want to know how the earth got its light, how the deer lost its tail, or

how the Cherokees got tobacco? The answers, gleaned from Indian lore, are available in this rich and interesting volume. Based on an earlier classic, *Myths Of The Cherokees*, by James Mooney this book includes sacred stories, wonder stories, and monster stories that have been told and retold by North Carolina Indians. Young people with a taste for folklore or an interest in Indian culture will find it to be delightful.

SALLIE SOUTHALL COTTEN. *The White Doe: The Fate of Virginia Dare, An Indian Legend*. (Murfreesboro: Johnson Publishing Company, 1975).

This is a reprint of the original volume published by J. B. Lippincott in 1901. It is a legend about Virginia Dare, the first child born of English parents in America, set in the form of poetry. As a segment of the mythology that has grown up around the "Lost Colony," *The White Doe* will be of interest to all who collect North Carolina literature and poetry. It is good to have this story available again. The Appendix includes notes from original sources in order to establish the historical basis for the poem.

GUY OWEN and MARY C. WILLIAMS (eds). *New Southern Poets: Selected Poems From Southern Poetry Review*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1974).

GUY OWEN and MARY C. WILLIAMS (eds). *North Carolina Poetry: The Seventies*. (Raleigh: Southern Poetry Review Press, English Department, N.C. State University, 1975).

RONALD H. BAYES. *King of August*. (Laurinburg: The Curveship Press, 1975).

MARTIN WILCOX. *Company*. (Hillsborough: The Bakke Press, 1974).

DEAN RITCH LOMAX. *Pine Ridge Poems*. (Durham: Moore Publishing Company, 1975).

It has been said that "poetry is the soul of a people." Whether one agrees with that statement or not, it is true that poets and poetry represent dimensions of culture that are not clearly reflected in the writings and actions of other public figures, professors, preachers, politicians, businessmen, and the like. Established poets seem to have no difficulty getting their poems into print. But new poets or fringe people whose poems do not satisfy the taste buds of poetry editors collect a lot of pink slips. This handicap is partially overcome by the *SOUTHERN POETRY REVIEW*, the UNC Press, and small publishing houses such as the three who have given us the five volumes listed here.

In reading *New Southern Poets*, *North Carolina Poetry*, and *King of August*, I was struck by how many of the poets represented in these volumes have college and university connections. Poets too must eat, but one wonders if modern poetry, at least that which is published and therefore recognized as having value, lives mainly in the bosom of academe. One wonders further if, in such a context, feeling, emotion, structure, and rhythm, characteristics so essential to the great poetry of an earlier time, can survive in the rational, critical, and experiential world of the professoriat. One gets the feeling here that professor-poets are writing lines for poet-professors. If that be the case, one can hardly say that modern poetry "is the soul of people."

The other two volumes will appeal to a different kind of reader. *Company* uses poetic forms in a different way. It combines prose, lyric, and narrative poetry to tell a simple story. *Pine Ridge Poems*, though judiciously avoiding structure and rhythm, uses simple and straightforward English to examine the everyday lives of everyday people.

These volumes should be in all North Carolina collections.