

New North Carolina Books

The North Carolina Information and Fact Book: The Tar Heel Almanac. 1979 ed. Greenville. C. R. Cannon, 1978. 111 pp. \$3.25. (Order from C. R. Cannon, P. O. Box 1961, Greenville, N. C. 27834).

This small paperbound volume is a useful quick reference tool for all North Carolina libraries and most North Carolina households. It includes information on the history of the state, population, education, government, economy, media, sports, recreation, and historic sites, profiles the 15 largest cities, and gives addresses for organizations and zip codes for towns and cities in the state. (If you get a hankering to sing the state song one night but can't remember all the words, you can find them—plus the music—in this volume.)

A table of contents would be a worthy addition, though there is a good subject index. In a volume such as this, errors are possible, so use it with some caution until it has proven itself. Publisher C. R. Cannon plans to make this an annual publication; let's hope he does.

Alice R. Cotten

Nancy Roberts and Bruce Roberts. *Appalachian Ghosts.* New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1978. 77 pp. \$5.95.

Nancy and Bruce Roberts' latest is a collection of ghost stories from the southern Appalachian region. Nearly half of them are set in mining towns of West Virginia. The rest take place in Kentucky, Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina.

Some of the tales may be familiar to readers. The first, "Laura," is a slightly altered version of "The Lovely Apparition" which appeared in *An Illustrated Guide to Ghosts and Mysterious Occurrences in the Old North State* (Charlotte, N. C.: McNally and Loftin, 1959). And "The Demon of Wizard Clip" from *This Haunted Land* (Charlotte, N. C.: McNally and Loftin, 1970) returns to torment the Livingstone family in "The Coming of the Demon." This story has been rewritten, but the plot is the same.

The stories in *Appalachian Ghosts* won't frighten most readers, but they will produce a certain uneasiness, a reluctance to look into dark corners. Mr. Roberts' photographs intensify that feeling. Seen anywhere else, they would suggest the natural beauty and peace of the mountain settings. But, paired with these stories, they take on an eerie, chilling quality. He includes some photographs of "ghosts," but these, although well enough done, are not as effective as the simpler ones of empty cabins and highway bends.

Ghost story fans will welcome this collection, and younger readers will be happily frightened by it.

Becky Stroud

Joseph Bruce Roark. *Home Places: Stories of a Carolina Boyhood*. By Joseph Bruce Roark, as told to Nancy Roark Ruiz. San Francisco?: Ruiz, 1977. \$17.50.

Joseph Bruce Roark was born in 1909 in Blacksburg, South Carolina, just over the state line from Cleveland County, North Carolina, and grew up in this area. Nancy Roark Ruiz is Joseph Roark's daughter, who grew up in California but delighted in her father's tales of his boyhood in Carolina, the place he always considered home.

Father and daughter combined to produce this small volume of nostalgic reminiscences of a time when life was perhaps simpler, pleasures and amusements were found closer to home, and one's daily duties revolved around the necessity of keeping food on the table and clothes on the backs of the family. The tales are enhanced by eighteen pen, ink, and brush illustrations by Ms. Ruiz.

Home Places, limited to 250 copies, may be ordered for \$17.50 plus \$1 for postage, handling, and insurance, from Nancy R. Ruiz, P. O. Box 7524, Oakland, CA 94601.

Alice R. Cotten

William H. Hooks. *Crossing the Line*. New York: Knopf, 1978. 124 pp. \$6.95.

Suzanne Newton. *Reubella and the Old Focus Home*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978. 197 pp. \$7.95.

Crossing the Line is a beautifully written novel. It is the story of Harrison Hawkins, an 11-year-old boy growing up in the 1930s South. His is a childhood of bottle cap checkers and Lay Low Sheep, but through it all he watches and ponders and begins to understand the meaning of color and kinship in his community.

Alternately enlightening and mystifying Harrison is Little Hattie, an old Black woman who lives on his father's farm. From her he learns gospel songs, where to look for wild herbs, and how black blood got mixed with white. And when Little Hattie disappears and racial hatred causes the death of a family member, Harrison is forced to cross the line, leaving innocence behind.

Although set 40 years in the past the questions raised in *Crossing the Line* are still worth considering, and young readers cannot help but be affected by them.

Reubella and the Old Focus Home also confronts social issues, but in a less serious way. Reubella (her parents didn't know about the virus) and her father run a tourist home in Shad, a small eastern North Carolina town. Stephen Foster is not a good manager, and Reubella, (tired of trying to run the place) is ready to run away. But she changes her mind when three elderly women arrive and arrange to lease the Foster Lodge and Tourist Home. They plan an "unrest home" where their lives "would find their final focus and meaning." Though in their seventies, the three offer their skills to the community. Ms. Nesselrode gives music lessons; Ms. Smithers teaches sculpture to anyone from 8 to 80; and Ms. Cromwell coaches the girls' basketball team, dressed in her 1932 Moriah College gym suit. The story ranges from real to fantastic as the characters confront such issues as equal rights and the problems of old age.

Becky Stroud

Art Gore. *Speak Softly to the Echoes*. Flagstaff, Arizona: Northland Press, 1978. 104 pp. \$25.00.

Art Gore, a North Carolina native living in Colorado, has effectively combined his talent as a photographer and writer in this 106 page volume. In fifteen short episodes the author presents reminiscences of his youth in Hoke and Cumberland Counties, mostly during the 1930s. The episodes touch upon such varied themes as playing marbles, and summers spent with three great-aunts in Fayetteville. Many stories possess the warmth, humor, and charm that readers who enjoy nostalgic reflections find appealing.

Speak Softly to the Echoes is beautifully illustrated with forty-five color photographs. Though not necessarily identifiable with North Carolina (one shows Mabry mill in Virginia), the photographs are well composed and depict themes appropriate to the book. The volume is rather expensive and will be a luxury for many libraries. Readers who choose to purchase it will have a book that is both a pleasure to look at and to read.

Jerry W. Cotten

Robert J. Goldstein. *Pier Fishing in North Carolina*. Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1978. 126 pp. \$6.95.

In the literature of salt-water angling, pier fishing is too often ignored. Volumes have been written about off-shore trolling and surf casting, but the easiest and most popular method of fishing is generally dismissed with only a few paragraphs. Robert J. Goldstein fills this void with *Pier Fishing in North Carolina*. Included are the usual chapters outlining tackle, equipment, baits, best times to fish, and cooking. The book's most valuable sections are the one telling about the individual fish, and the one which gives short sketches of each of North Carolina's 34 ocean piers.

The chapter on individual fish tells when and how to catch just about every kind of fish found in North Carolina's inshore waters. Excellent illustrations assist the angler who is unable to identify what's dangling from his hook. Even more valuable is the chapter on individual piers. It describes the general bottom structure found at each one, what kind of fish might be encountered, and what facilities the pier provides.

Robert Dawkins

All the reviewers for this issue are staff members of the North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill. Future reviews will be written by various librarians and writers from around the state. In order to involve all of you who are interested in reviewing North Carolina I would appreciate receiving a post card with your name, address, phone number and fields of interest. I will then attempt to match up books and reviewers and give you plenty of time to prepare.

From time to time the column will be devoted to a specific type of book such as children's fiction, cookbooks, sports, poetry, etc. Included will be new works as well as classics. I would be happy to receive suggestions for this type of column. The book reviews are here to aid you in your work and understanding of our state and we welcome your advice and criticism.

Suzanne S. Levy