

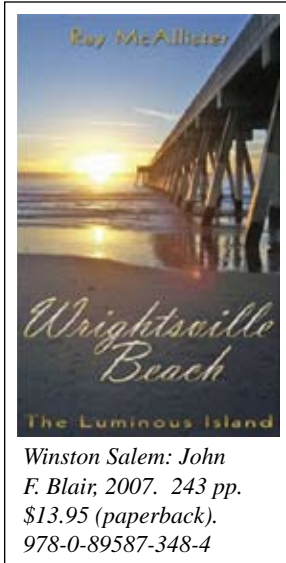
North Carolina Books

Nicholas Graham, compiler



Ray McAllister

■ Wrightsville Beach: The Luminous Island



As a long-time fan of Wrightsville Beach, I hope that my knowledge of this community helps me discern the author's grasp of the important historical and current issues about the place.

Wrightsville Beach: The Luminous Island is an interesting, well written, and carefully researched treatise. It covers the main events of Wrightsville's history, including some controversial topics. I was pleased to see in the author's preface the disclaimer: "Where there are historical disputes, this book goes with the most likely version or, if none has an advantage, presents them all." The author's intentions

are stated up front: "This book is intended as an entertaining read more than a formal history lesson." This is evident in the book's easygoing, accessible style.

Some of the highlights of the book include coverage of the beach railroad and trolley systems – these were in their heyday during the early twentieth century, before the advent of the automobile. There is good coverage of major storms and hurricanes and their damage, the effects of World War II, the devastating effect of structure fires, beach erosion, and more recently, the serious problem of skyrocketing land values.

One of my favorite topics related to Wrightsville Beach is the Lumina, a fabulous multi-story beach pavilion that was built in 1905. I admit to a complete and utter fascination with this historic building that was razed in 1973. As a child in the 1960s I enjoyed the Lumina during the period it was called the "Crystal Pavilion and Pier." I took it for granted, not realizing the significance of its history and legends. Only as an adult did I come to appreciate the loss of it, and to this day, when I stand on the beach looking over at the condominiums that sit on the site where the Lumina once ruled, I deeply miss the lights and magic of this wonderful place. I was interested in how McAllister would treat this subject, considering its deeply woven connection to Wrightsville Beach. I was not disappointed. The author referenced other publications about the Lumina and gave them proper credit. I often wonder what Wrightsville Beach would be like today if someone had been able to save the Lumina.

This book also covers other interesting features and events related to Wrightsville Beach. Included are chapters about the sperm whale carcass nicknamed "Trouble" that washed up on the beach in 1928. This creature's skeleton hangs in the N.C. Museum of Natural History today. There are chapters about the Donora, Pennsylvania smog victims and how they were treated to a free week at the beach in 1948. There is good coverage of the history of Shell Island, and many local haunts, favorite stores, hotels, and restaurants are mentioned. I suspect there are some stories that were missed, but a number of local citizens are featured in these pages and the tone of the book conveys a comfortable folksy viewpoint.

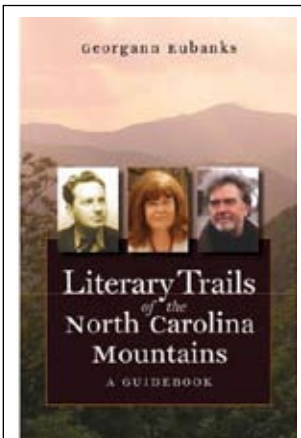
The situation with rising tax assessments and the temptation for long-time residents to "sell out" in order to maintain financial viability is addressed. This often leads to the destruction of historic properties that are replaced by "McMansion" style rental units. Wrightsville Beach continues to be a family-oriented beach, busy during the summer season and somewhat sleepy otherwise, but rising land values keep it in the sights of opportunistic real estate developers and wealthy beach-goers. The threat of hurricanes and storms also keeps insurance rates high and local zoning regulations tough. It remains to be seen if middle-class vacationers will be squeezed out as properties on the beach continue to command higher and higher prices.

Wrightsville Beach: The Luminous Island is a nice little book about an important spot on the North Carolina coast. This book is suitable for any library wishing to include works about state and regional points of interest.

Eleanor I. Cook
Appalachian State University

Georgann Eubanks

■ Literary Trails of the North Carolina Mountains: A Guidebook



Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007. 432 pp. \$35.00
ISBN 978-0-8078-3137-3

The mountains of western North Carolina have long been the home of some very interesting stories. Thomas Wolfe's mother refused to rent a room to F. Scott Fitzgerald because he was a drunk. Henry James thought the Biltmore House was a "gorgeous practical joke" and could only stay a few days before escaping his misery by heading off to California. Edith Wharton visited Biltmore that same year and was overcome with delight at the landscape and the house.

Georgann Eubanks's book, *Literary Trails of the North Carolina Mountains*, provides a treasure trove of anecdotes such as these,

as well as poetry and prose by western North Carolina writers including O. Henry, Anne Tyler, Lillian Jackson Braun, Fred Chappell, and Kathryn Stripling Byer. The book is a collection of "literary trails" for each of eighteen areas in the mountains of western North Carolina. Each trail has a map with several stops for important cities and locations. Eubanks relates stories of the "literary landscape," primarily anecdotes of past and current events of literary interest. Anyone who has visited the areas that Eubanks covers in her book will recognize the places and descriptions, and the stories that she tells add new life to the landscape.

Maps, websites, physical addresses, and contact information are included at the end of each tour for the places described as well as local places of literary interest, such as bookstores, museums, and libraries. The book also includes many wonderful pictures of the scenic locales and places to round out the experience for the armchair literary tourist.

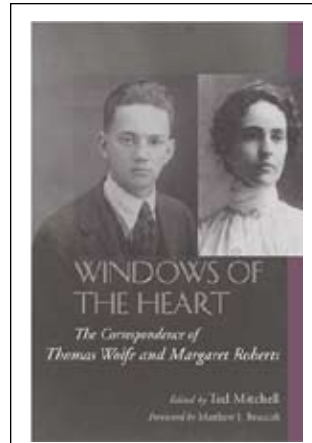
Georgann Eubanks is a writer, teacher, and consultant, and has been director of the Duke University Writers' Workshop since 1989. She was a founder of the North Carolina Writers' Network and past chair of the North Carolina Humanities Council. Eubanks has also won a North Carolina Arts Council Literary Fellowship and been the recipient of a regional Emmy as a principal of the documentary production firm Minnow Media.

This book is a valuable addition to any collection, whether public or academic, in any geographic region. Those who live in the areas described will certainly have their understanding of the region enhanced by the many stories and writings in the book. Those who live outside the area will find this evocative book very interesting.

Scott Rice
Appalachian State University

Ted Mitchell, ed.

■ Windows of the Heart: The Correspondence of Thomas Wolfe and Margaret Roberts



Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007. 201pp. \$34.95. ISBN: 978-1-57003-674-3

For the first time, all of the surviving letters between Thomas Wolfe and his grade-school teacher, Margaret Roberts, are published together. Roberts was the English teacher at the North State Fitting School in Asheville, where Wolfe was a student from age eleven through high school.

From November 1917, when Wolfe entered the University of North Carolina, until February 1930, after his first book, *Look Homeward, Angel*, was published, Tom Wolfe and Margaret Roberts wrote frequent long letters. He discussed in detail the process by which he wrote and she consistently

encouraged him to believe that he had a real talent for writing.

Although Tom often shared with Mrs. Roberts some details of the plays and articles he was writing, he did not send anything from his first novel. His letters to her revealed the concern he had for finding a publisher and his joy at having the novel accepted by an eminent publishing house. As soon as it was available, he sent his former teacher a copy of the book. She was aghast that he had included members of her family, with barely disguised names, describing them in a most unfavorable light. She was so hurt that she did not write to him.

For six years, Tom did not go to Asheville and he and Roberts did not correspond. Mrs. Roberts read Tom's books as they were published and kept up with news of his activities, but did not write to him. Finally, Mrs. Roberts wrote to Tom and invited him to call on her and her husband. After much hesitation, Tom consented to visit them with a friend. Their correspondence resumed in 1936 and continued until Wolfe's death in 1938.

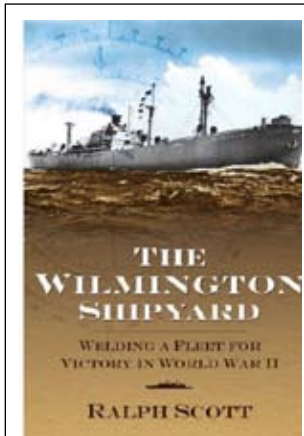
Ted Mitchell, the editor of this book, is a site interpreter at the Thomas Wolfe Memorial in Asheville. The letters are supplemented by forty-two photographs and a chronology of the families of Margaret Roberts and Thomas Wolfe. Each letter has an introduction that explains the circumstances of its writing and each letter is annotated with relevant facts. Also included are a list for background reading and an extensive index.

This book would be suitable for a high school, college, or public library. This is also a useful work for and would certainly appeal to the Thomas Wolfe scholar. However, it is interesting to read and the various supplementary materials provide adequate background for the reader who does not know the work of Thomas Wolfe.

Elizabeth J. Laney
Retired

Ralph Scott

■ The Wilmington Shipyard: Welding a Fleet for Victory in World War II



Charleston, S.C.: *The History Press*, 2007. 160pp. \$19.99. ISBN 1-5962-9210-5

Written by historian/librarian Ralph Scott, *The Wilmington Shipyard* is a painstakingly detailed description of the behind-the-scenes maneuvering that led to the building of the shipyard, its development during the war years, labor strife that occurred throughout, and the subsequent closing of the yard. It also contains some interesting anecdotes about how Wilmington-built ships were involved in world events both during and after World War II.

According to Scott, the creation of the shipyard in Wilmington was the result of intense lobbying by local interests, much of the time against

nearby Morehead City, which also sought a wartime yard of its own. The ultimate location of the North Carolina Shipbuilding Company in Wilmington was decided most assuredly by “the proximity of the site to its parent company in Newport News, Virginia” (p. 13). Subsequent to the Maritime Commission’s initial purchase of land and creation of the yard in 1941, several significant additions were added throughout the course of the war. One of the interesting wartime issues raised by the creation of the yard was the propensity for its lights to create a more visible target for Axis submarines. While the site proved very capable of shutting its lights quickly and efficiently during an air raid, the need to press wartime production led to the lights being left on despite the danger caused to passing vessels.

During the course of the war the Wilmington shipyard was able to produce a total of 243 vessels, starting with the well-known “liberty ships” and progressing to more advanced vessels over time. This was accomplished despite significant labor issues and interests whereby overlapping and competing parties such as management, the CIO, AFL, and the Industrial Union of Marine Shipbuilding Workers of America vied for the loyalty and support of workers. Scott covers these conflicts in great detail in a chapter labeled “Labor Problems.”

According to Scott, Wilmington-built ships did see significant action throughout the war, and participated in the D-Day invasion. Furthermore, some ships saw action in subsequent international incidents such as the Cuban Missile Crisis.

In a section on the postwar years, Scott details the work of various individuals who tried to maintain the shipyard facilities at Wilmington and possibly convert them into a place where ships could be brought for repair. Despite all of these efforts, however, this endeavor was thwarted by the Maritime Commission which sought to maintain the shipyard as a closed facility but one that could be brought back into service quickly in the event of a national emergency.

In his thorough use of both primary and secondary sources, Scott provides an appendix that offers, among other things, the creation dates and fate of each vessel built over the lifetime of the shipyard. This book is recommended for public and academic libraries with specialized collections focusing on North Carolina, World War II naval history, or labor history in the World War II era.

Dr. Richard J. Moniz Jr.
Johnson & Wales University

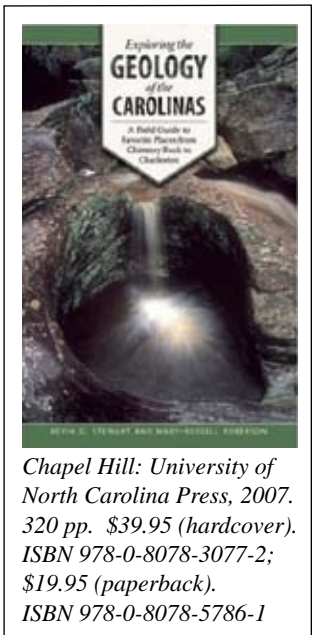
Kevin G. Stewart and Mary-Russell Roberson

■ Exploring the Geology of the Carolinas: A Field Guide to Favorite Places from Chimney Rock to Charleston

Kevin G. Stewart and Mary-Russell Roberson have not only crafted an informative and thorough field guide to the geology of North and South Carolina, they have written one that is readable, understandable, and usable. Starting with the preface, where the authors grab the reader’s attention with a series of questions many Carolinians have surely pondered, and continuing through the first five chapters, the authors provide a solid foundation for understanding the basic concepts of geology and how they have shaped the Carolinas.

The early chapters - the only ones meant to be read straight through - discuss the geological history of the region, how amateurs can learn to “read” rocks like professionals, how scientists study rock formations, and a brief discussion of the immensity of geological time. After this solid introduction, there are thirty-one field trip chapters (with the vast majority describing North Carolina locations), which are divided into Blue Ridge, Piedmont, and Coastal Plain sections. Readers are encouraged to pick and choose from this list to fashion their own day trips and geological excursions. The trip chapters contain textual and pictorial descriptions of the sites and the geologic formations found there, and they also provide basic maps, driving directions, and sometimes suggestions for further reading. The volume concludes with a comprehensive glossary, a practical list of additional resources, and a very nicely done index.

With its convenient size and attractive hardback cover, the volume is easy to take on outings, whether carrying it in one’s hands or stuffing it in a backpack. Although the black-and-white photographs and diagrams are typically crisp and of high quality, more color images would have significantly improved this book and made it a bit easier to use. For example, the authors provide excellent textual descriptions of rock formations and how to



Chapel Hill: *University of North Carolina Press*, 2007. 320 pp. \$39.95 (hardcover). ISBN 978-0-8078-3077-2; \$19.95 (paperback). ISBN 978-0-8078-5786-1

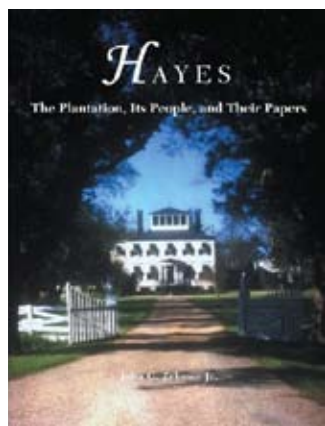
identify them, but when the reader examines the accompanying black-and-white photographs, many of that item's distinguishing characteristics are indiscernible. While there are a few color plates in the middle of the volume that show some examples, these are typically several pages away from the relevant portions of text and are far too few in number. In addition, the diagrams, such as those showing how portions of the earth's crust have moved, would have benefited from being in color, although, even in black and white they add to the reader's understanding of the very complicated forces of tectonic movement. Even with these very slight deficiencies, this field guide is an excellent addition to any library collection and will undoubtedly be in high demand.

Jason Tomberlin

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

John G. Zehmer

■ Hayes: The Plantation, Its People, and Their Papers



Raleigh: Office of Archives and History; in association with the North Caroliniana Society, 2007. 257pp. \$36. ISBN 978-0-86526-325-3

The Hayes Plantation survives today because of the intelligence and foresight of a few strong North Carolina personalities. This look at the plantation and its people uses copious primary resources to illustrate how the house and its farm were built, furnished, worked by slaves, and finally kept out of the hands of those who might have led it to its destruction.

John Zehmer does an excellent job bringing to life the manner in which James Cathcart Johnston, a gentleman of some means but no immediate family, supported a bevy of

needy relatives while growing his own personal estate. This work is very much a biography of Johnston and his heir, Edward Wood, but it also brings to life the typical intrigues of a gentleman farmer before the Civil War.

Zehmer uses Johnston's own correspondence with his factors, his slaves, his family, and even a few ladies of interest to draw a complete picture of Johnston's life. With bills and receipts, one gets a feel for the great effort Johnston put into running his estate and making it beautiful while remaining conscious of the cost associated with owning such a property.

When Johnston died, leaving his estate not to a blood relative but to a friend he trusted to do the right thing for his former slaves as well as the property itself, it created the trial of the century. It drew some of the most prominent legal minds in North Carolina to both sides of the fight. Wood was able to prevail, and the will

that Johnston so carefully crafted to preserve the estate won out and gave Edward Wood and his family a home that subsequent generations of the Wood family have diligently preserved.

This is an engaging read. The use of primary resources both as sources and as illustrations illuminates the text but does not slow the reader down. This work would be suitable for any library with a North Carolina room as it is both a biography of important North Carolinians as well as a history of the Edenton area during the first half of the 19th century. Two minor drawbacks to this beautiful work are the sometimes weak transitions between topics and the profusion of similarly named people associated with Johnston and his plantation.

Zehmer's work takes us from the early years of the 1800s to the present owners and looks toward tomorrow, as the Hayes Plantation still needs good stewardship in order to remain a North Carolina gem.

Caroline Keizer

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

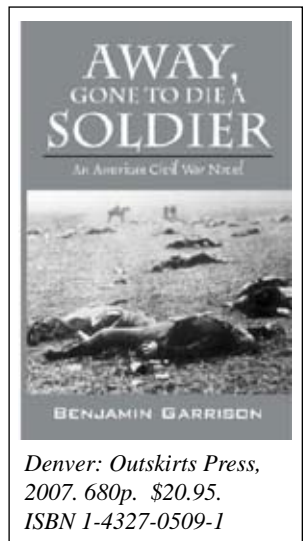
Benjamin Garrison

■ Away, Gone to Die a Soldier: An American Civil War Novel

Benjamin Garrison, a former resident of Wilson, North Carolina, presents a fictional account of the North Carolina 23rd Infantry Regiment's struggles with daily life during the Civil War. Written with a careful eye to historical detail, and clearly drawing from extensive primary source research, the author succeeds in telling the story of a "mess" or a community within the regiment through the eyes of Private Eric Fry.

Away, Gone to Die A Soldier amplifies and complements the regimental narrative of Walter Clark, editor of *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina*

in the Great War 1861-65; Written by Members of the Respective Commands (Goldsboro, NC: Nash Brothers, 1901). For example, while Clark simply describes the results of a battle or skirmish, Garrison presents resulting tasks for the regiment, which include the difficult digging of graves for the dead soldiers and the more arduous work of burying the horses. The lack of supplies and uniforms as noted in *Histories* is illustrated by the joy that Eric's group expresses with their first cup of good coffee and new uniforms. Details like these are the hallmark of good historical fiction.

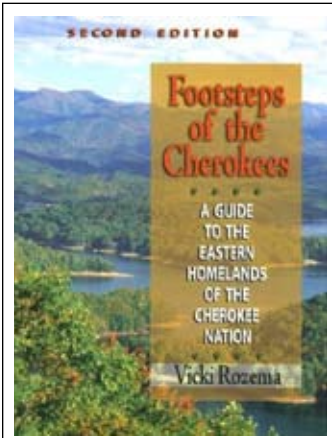


Denver: Outskirts Press, 2007. 680p. \$20.95. ISBN 1-4327-0509-1

Shirley Swanson Gregory

Wilson County Public Library

■ Footsteps of the Cherokees: A Guide to the Eastern Homelands of the Cherokee Nation



Winston-Salem: John F. Blair,
2007. 394 pp. \$21.95.
ISBN 0-89587-346-X

Footsteps of the Cherokees: A Guide to the Eastern Homelands of the Cherokee Nation presents readers with a historical overview of Cherokee Indian life before their forced removal to the West in 1838. The book also serves as a guidebook to key Cherokee cultural sites located in Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama.

Before 1838, the Cherokee Indians attempted to co-exist with White settlers who were moving westward in search of available land, hunting areas, and

rich resources such as gold. Unfortunately, through a succession of different treaties, most notably the Treaty of New Echota (1835), the Cherokee tribe was forced to cede large portions of their ancestral lands. When the government gave removal orders, a small contingent of Cherokee Indians resisted and sought refuge in the Blue Ridge Mountains. A large majority of the Cherokee, though, made the fateful journey to the West and succumbed to starvation or disease along the Trail of Tears en route to their new home in Oklahoma.

Author Vicki Rozema divides her book into two parts: a brief history of the Cherokee tribe and a guide to cultural sites. In this second edition, Rozema includes over 190 photographs and provides area maps for each Cherokee cultural site discussed in the book. An extensive bibliography of both primary and secondary sources is provided for easy reference. Driving directions, applicable fees, and cross references are listed where necessary. As a matter of general interest, many of the sites mentioned by the author have been designated by the National Park Service as key stops along the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Besides *Footsteps of the Cherokees*, Vicki Rozema has also written *Cherokee Voices: Early Accounts of Cherokee Life in the East* and *Voices from the Trail of Tears*.

This book is well-suited for inclusion in an academic or special library collection and can be considered essential reading for anyone with an interest in Native American history or historic sites.

David W. Young
University of North Carolina at Pembroke

Submission requirements for North Carolina Libraries

Electronic file of article.

- Word or WordPerfect
- Windows/Mac format acceptable (No UNIX or CP/M please)
- Delivered via email

We use the Chicago manual of style (15th edition, 2003).

We have a rolling deadline, articles are juried when received.

Publication of approved articles is in about 3-9 months depending on space available.

Please contact Ralph Scott scottr@ecu.edu for information.