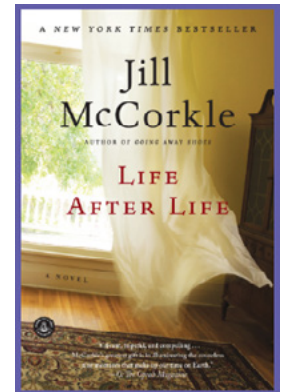
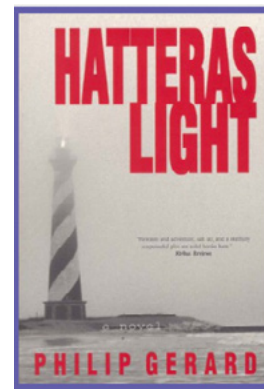
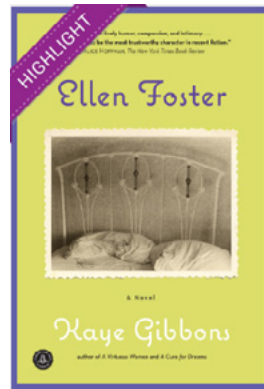


William Joseph Thomas, Assistant Director for Collections and Scholarly Communications,  
Joyner Library, East Carolina University

## Highlighting NC LIVE's Home Grown eBooks

Have you read Kaye Gibbons' *Ellen Foster*? Philip Gerard's *Hatteras Light*? How about Jill McCorkle's *Life After Life*? What do these three have in common (apart from their NC authors)? They're all available in NC LIVE's HomeGrown eBooks collection, along with more than 4,500 other titles. Rob Ross, executive director of NC LIVE, says that the HomeGrown eBooks collection began in 2014 in order to collect and offer North Carolina-published popular and scholarly titles. He particularly highlighted their benefits across all NC LIVE communities of interest: perpetual ownership with unlimited simultaneous uses with no digital rights management means every book is always available, even popular and current titles that could be adopted by local book clubs or university classes.<sup>1</sup>

HomeGrown titles are broadly divided among three "curations" or anthologies: Fiction, Nonfiction, and Young Adult and Juvenile Fiction and Nonfiction. Each anthology is further subdivided into collections, and all are browseable or searchable. The Fiction anthology contains more than 600 works in the following collections: Popular Fiction, Romance, Short Stories, Mysteries & Thrillers, Westerns, Horror, War & Military Fiction, Historical Fiction, and Sci-Fi &



Fantasy. Avid readers can dive into novels by Julia Alvarez, romance from Patricia Lee Macomber, or short stories by Curtis Smith or Michael Parker.

Nonfiction's twenty-one collections ramble across performing arts, North Carolina history, biographies and memoirs, folklore, and education. An avid cook, NC LIVE director Rob Ross mentioned a predilection for the Food & Wine collection, although additional notable collections include Cultural Heritage, Poetry, Religion, and Travel. From last year's additions, *Elvis Speaks from Beyond the Grave* caught the eye of our colleague at Durham Tech; this title, along with *Aliens in the Backyard*, is featured in the "Folklore & Supernatural" Collection.<sup>2</sup>

The over 200 titles within the Young Adult and Juvenile Fiction and Nonfiction anthology are grouped into the Children's Fiction, YA General Fiction, YA Mystery, Thriller, & Horror, YA Sci-Fi & Fantasy, and YA Nonfiction

collections. Heart-pounding adventures like Charles Grant's *He Told Me To* can be found there, or the light-hearted *Anton and Cecil: Cats at Sea*. YA Nonfiction includes literary criticism, science, a series on joining the US military, and more.

NC LIVE created HomeGrown eBooks after spending six months studying various consortial models, and piloting a small collection from North Carolina publisher John F. Blair.<sup>3</sup> Staff determined that they would proceed with a plan to purchase perpetual ownership to the titles with unlimited simultaneous users, ensure MARC records were provided to aid discovery, on a platform that would permit authenticated users to search, browse, view and download content to their computers or mobile devices. From that small pilot and determination of the way forward, NC LIVE with an initial group of about 1200 titles, from a group of publishers that

1. Rob Ross, email message to author, June 29, 2020.

2. Brooks, Stephen, "NC LIVE's HomeGrown Collection Adds 495 Titles," Durham Tech Library Blog, May 30, 2019, <https://libraryblog.durhamtech.edu/?p=5038>.

3. Morris, Jill. 2015. "Home Grown Ebooks: North Carolina's Collaborative Ebook Pilot Project." *Collaborative Librarianship* 7 (1): 16–21.

included not only John F. Blair but also Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, Crossroad Press, Gryphon House, Ingalls Publishing Group, McFarland, Press 53, and UNC Press.<sup>4</sup> Duke University Press also began providing HomeGrown ebooks in recent years, and NC LIVE staff continue to seek out other publishers for content.

The Executive Director of NC LIVE leads negotiations with the publishers, and members of the Resource Advisory Committee select the individual titles to be purchased. On an ongoing basis, NC LIVE's objective is to add between 1,000 and 2,000 titles per year to HomeGrown, funding them from pledges by libraries from across the communities of interest. NC LIVE is occasionally able to apply unused grant funds or reserves funds to supplement the member library donations, according to Ross.<sup>5</sup>

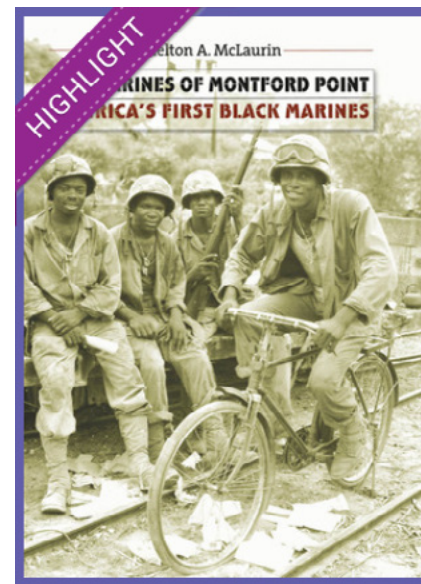
NC LIVE welcomes suggestions for publishers to work with, or specific titles to consider. Another way libraries can help is by supporting HomeGrown during the annual pledge drive that occurs. The base contribution request is only \$300 per year, a wonderful value of about \$15 per title for existing ebooks. More importantly, those funds are used to add new titles each year. During the 2018-2019 year, 1,206 new ebooks were acquired with those pledge funds, and for 2019-2020, another 495 were added. Libraries can set up recurring pledges and can select which quarter they give. For more information on supporting HomeGrown, see [https://www.nclive.org/support\\_homegrown](https://www.nclive.org/support_homegrown).

Catalogers at UNC-CH, NCSU, and Duke University create and enhance MARC records so that NC LIVE constituents can download them to their catalogs—gifts of their time

that NC LIVE appreciates. Usage of the HomeGrown collection has been excellent—nearly 19,000 fulltext views last year, and NC LIVE staff have found that usage at an individual library expands dramatically when records are loaded to the catalog. NC LIVE staff also ensure that Serials Solutions and Summon are up to date on coverage.

The publishing platform, BiblioBoard, was selected because it offered the most flexibility (especially with respect to DRM-free titles) and best value, according to Ross. NC LIVE has periodically assessed other platforms since 2014 but, he states, they have not found another that better meets their needs.<sup>6</sup> BiblioBoard provides an easy-to-use experience, framing the text in a central area on screen, with advance and return icons in a navigation ribbon on the side. Users can also zoom into text or images, or share via Facebook, Twitter, or Pinterest. Creating and signing into a free BiblioBoard account permits users to save favorites, create bookmarks, add notes, and sync their preferences to the account.

In addition to the HomeGrown eBook collection, NC LIVE users can access BiblioBoard core collections open access collections. BiblioBoard's Core is described as its "chief historical database," containing 400 anthologies with more than 14,000 ebooks and 24,000 other primary source documents. These anthologies cover a wide variety of subjects, from Abolitionism in the United States and American Slave Narratives to collections focused on Yosemite and the Zodiac. There is a substantial anthology on Cherokees. There are also many historical anthologies focused on specific time periods and places, literary collections focused



4. *Ibid.*

5. Rob Ross, in discussion with the author, June 30, 2020.

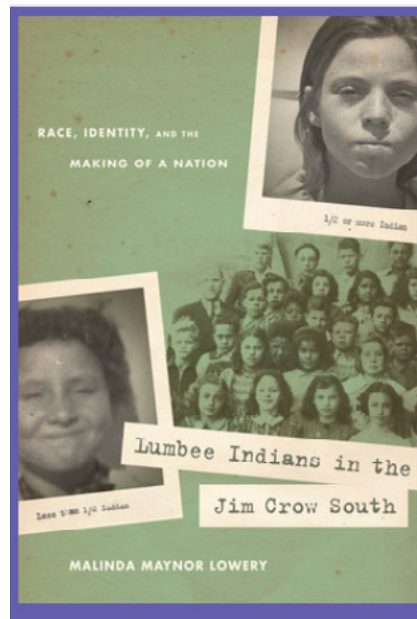
6. Rob Ross, email message to author, June 29, 2020.

on individual authors, religious studies collections, and collections on many more subjects, including art, entertainment, and music.

Open access collections in BiblioBoard include Open Educational Collections, Public Library of Science Research, exhibits from libraries and archives, community history projects, and classic literature, including “Reads for Kids” (featuring a lovely edition of *The Velveteen Rabbit!*). Also of note are an African American history collection, collection of scholarly content on Race, Gender & Sexuality Studies, and COVID-19 community projects.

In addition to traditional text-based books, BiblioBoard contains other formats. One potentially overlooked format is video, with nearly 400 selections ranging from a “History of Toys” to “The Chemistry of Beer” by way of Frank Capra’s “Why We Fight” series and dramatic productions of literary classics. Many of the latter are films in the public domain. There are also more than 5,000 image files and 260 audio recordings. Among the image files are a photograph from the Selma to Montgomery March for the Right to Vote, well-known paintings by Maxfield Parrish, and lithographs, postcards, and maps. Among the notable audio recordings is an interview about Rosa Parks, “60 Years On” by her niece, Sheila McCauley Keys, and another is Eleanor Roosevelt’s World Children’s

Day Speech. Many of the other audio files are concerts or readings of literature. Additional content types are articles and documents (documents include maps, scores, and other prints).



Another important use of HomeGrown ebooks came recently. In response to Black Lives Matter protests after the death of George Floyd, many libraries and institutions were publishing responses. NC LIVE wanted to show support by sharing useful resources, so staff created and shared an [Anti-Racism Reading List](#) of more than 100 titles from HomeGrown books. There was and is a huge demand for popular anti-racist titles. Many of these titles are checked out, unavailable, or delayed due to high demand, but of

course the titles in the HomeGrown Collection are immediately available and accessible to any NC resident with a library card. It is a valuable collection to highlight, especially with so many titles from North Carolina publishers like UNC Press and Duke University Press. The titles were selected by exploring the HomeGrown Collection by subject and also searching for key terms. The focus of the list is African American history, social studies, literature, biographies, memoirs, and art. Many titles are specific to our state, which makes it of particular interest to NC LIVE members. Ross hopes that libraries share the list with their patrons. Librarians are encouraged to copy the list and modify it to meet the specific needs of their communities. Public libraries could select titles from the list for book clubs. Academic libraries could promote titles to faculty to use in coursework. Each entry in the List links to that work within HomeGrown.<sup>7</sup>

Future developments that NC LIVE is exploring are North Carolina-related titles published by other university presses, or titles written by UNC system faculty by published outside the state. Another exciting possibility is NC-related video content. Remember to help provide these titles during the next pledge period, and in the meantime, explore HomeGrown!

7. *Ibid.*

