

New North Carolina Books

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THAD STEM, JR. and ALAN BUTLER. *Senator Sam Ervin's Best Stories*. Durham: Moore Publishing Co., 1973. 144pp. \$5.95.

The stories told here by Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr., were recorded in an interview (or interviews) by the authors. The Senator was asked specific questions designed to trigger the stories, and sometimes the interviewers told stories equally as good as the Senator's. We have here a readable record of a give-and-take session in which all participants vied to cap the last story told. Most of the tales deal with politicians, judges, and lawyers and with events in court. In many instances people who are the subject of a story are identified by name, in others the names are easy to guess, while some of the stories may be apocryphal. Reading this book will bring forth many smiles, perhaps, but few loud laughs. Senator Ervin's funniest stories perhaps do not lend themselves to type.

MABEL EVANS JONES. *A Rascal, Oh No!* New York: Vantage Press, 1973. 166pp. \$4.95. Illus.

Mrs. Mabel Evans Jones, a native of Manteo, is a retired teacher and former superintendent of schools in Dare County. This book for young people is based on her long years of association with the people of the Outer Banks. It is the story of a family's devotion to an intelligent dog and the role he plays in the lives of the children. The setting is the Outer Banks, of course, and the time around World War I. It is well written with a ring of authenticity which will appeal to young people.

GEORGE BARTON CUTTEN. *Silversmiths of North Carolina, 1696-1850*. Revised by Mary Reynolds Peacock. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1973. \$15.00. 142pp. Illus.

In 1948 the State Department of Archives and History published Dr. Cutten's work on silversmiths in North Carolina, and it promptly became one of the most popular publications ever issued by the Department. After a few years, when it was out of print, copies which turned up in the used book market were sold at many times the original price. It is good now to have Dr. Cutten's work available again and even more so in the light of Mrs. Peacock's revisions and extensive additions. The work takes the form of biographical sketches of all known and identifiable silversmiths who worked in North Carolina. The sketches are adequately annotated so that those who desire additional information may check further. There also are numerous handsome illustrations of the work of these craftsmen and artists with careful descriptions of their pieces.

SONIA LEVITIN. *Roanoke, A Novel of the Lost Colony*. New York: Atheneum, 1973. 213pp. \$6.25. Map. Illus.

This is a novel directed to the 10-14-year-old reader and it tells a very plausible story of the Lost Colony. Hero is 17-year-old William Wythers who becomes a strong leader when circumstances require brave and decisive action. Insofar as possible the story follows fact, but after the departure of Governor John White for England to secure supplies, fiction takes over. The conclusion of the story is quite believable and may be as good an answer to the

question of the fate of the colony as any of the others which have been imagined through the years.

HENRIETTA H. WILKINSON. *The Mint Museum of Art at Charlotte, A Brief History.* Charlotte: Heritage Printers, 1973. 105pp. \$4.95. Illus.

As is the case with all Heritage Printers' books, this is a handsome example of the bookmakers' art. It is attractively designed, printed, bound, and illustrated. The text is equally as praiseworthy. Mrs. Wilkinson has provided a fascinating history of a most interesting building. Her work consists of a review of gold mining in the vicinity of Charlotte, an account of the life and work of William Strickland (architect of the U. S. Mint building in Charlotte), and an account of the activity which occurred within the Mint from its construction in 1835-36 until the present time. The operation of a federal mint and some of the persons associated with it prior to 1913, the activity when the building was used as a federal courthouse, Red Cross headquarters, and meeting place for a woman's club, are related. Threatened with destruction in 1932 to provide space for expansion of the post office, the building was "rescued" and moved to a new location to serve as a museum of art. Finally, there is an account of the last forty years of growth and service to the community and state during which the Mint Museum of Art has come to be recognized as one of the country's outstanding small museums.

BERTRAM HAWTHORNE GROENE. *Tracing Your Civil War Ancestor.* Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, Publisher, 1973. 124pp. \$5.95. Illus.

This book may be described as a North Carolina book in a rather limited way, but the fact that it was issued by a North Carolina publisher gives it claims to our attention. The author, a native of Ohio, is presently a member of the faculty of Southeastern Louisiana University but was once a member of the faculty of East Carolina University. An experienced histor-

ian, genealogist, and a collector of Civil War artifacts, Dr. Groene has produced a guide for those seeking to trace the service of Civil War veterans. His book can lead the researcher through the complicated files of the National Archives and the various state archives, and it also serves as a guide to countless printed sources. It contains specific directions, cites books by author and title, and gives addresses of various agencies from which guidance and information may be obtained. This is an indispensable handbook for anyone about to embark upon a course of research dealing with Civil War history.

RUTH BLACKWELDER and A. HAYES DUNLAP. *Old Charlotte and Old Mecklenburg Today.* Charlotte: The Mecklenburg Historical Association, 1973. 56pp. Illus.

This is a book of handsome colored pictures and lengthy captions. The subject is old places of interest in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County — homes, churches, cemeteries, monuments, and schools. Concise facts pertaining to the places are sufficient to arouse considerable interest. (Order from the Association at P. O. Box 4032, Charlotte 28204.)

RICHARD WALSER, editor. *Tar Heel Laughter.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1974. 309pp. \$9.95. Illus.

For many years Prof. Walser of the English faculty at N. C. State University made note of humorous Tar Heel tales as he went about his more scholarly research. In *Tar Heel Laughter* he gives us a collection of his best findings ranging in time from John Lawson in 1709 to some of Senator Ervin's best anecdotes. These stories, which vary in length from just a few lines to half a dozen pages, will produce reactions ranging all the way from an amused smile to uncontrolled laughter. They are selected from individual authors, as just indicated but also including William Byrd, Zeb Vance, Thomas Wolfe, Paul Green, Carl Goerch, and Harry Golden; others come from numerous newspapers,

some are traditional stories only now published, while others are episodes from longer works of fiction. There also is a section entitled "Black Merriment." Copies of this book should be in every library in the state as well as on every bedside table. Those having difficulty getting to sleep will surely laugh themselves to the point of exhaustion, when they will lapse into the sleep of the weary.

HUGH F. RANKIN. *Francis Marion: The Swamp Fox*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1973. 346pp. \$10.00. Illus. Maps.

Francis Marion had not been particularly distinguished in the Revolutionary War, even though he was a lieutenant colonel, until after Charleston was captured by the British in May, 1780. This study of Marion by Hugh F. Rankin, a North Carolinian now on the faculty of Tulane University, deals primarily with his career in 1780-1781 when he gained fame as a guerrilla leader during the time the British were occupying the Carolinas. With Marion as the point of focus, Rankin relates the intriguing story of a divided people (in which Tory influence was strong) and of bands of roving plunderers. Marion, "The Swamp Fox," was the leader of one of these bands, and his men contributed greatly to the American success. His skirmishes with the enemy on both sides of the Carolina line might individually be dismissed, but in sum, as a constant menace to the British, they were of considerable significance. His brave exploits in the dark days when victory seemed far away, were an inspiration to many Americans.

Francis Marion has been the subject of many popular biographies for more than a century, but Rankin's book undoubtedly will stand as the definitive study. It is based on extensive research in contemporary records. It is fully annotated, has a classified bibliography, and is carefully indexed. Marion's appeal to the general reader as well as to the scholar suggests that this book should be a popular one in North Carolina as the Revolutionary Bicentennial approaches.

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