

New North Carolina Books

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LOUIS D. RUBIN, JR. and C. HUGH HOLMAN (eds.). *Southern Literary Study: Problems and Possibilities*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 235 pp.

The South remains the most distinct region and/or sub-culture in the American nation. Though its differences, both good and bad, have certainly been exaggerated in books, movies, and newspapers, the South remains a rich cultural lode. This lode is mined by scholars as well as hack-writers, seeking significant differences as well as copy that will sell. Unfortunately, in the public mind the two efforts become confused; and the passions, traditions, people, and literature of the South becomes too often caricature. The victory of Jimmy

Carter in the presidential election of 1976 has made this problem even more acute because of the tripe appearing in the press and on television about the Southern political renaissance.

This volume represents an effort to clarify the issue, so far as Southern literature is concerned. It is the product of a conference held in Chapel Hill to discuss the problems and possibilities of Southern literary studies, warts and all. Four scholarly papers were read: "Southern Literature and Southern Society," "Early Southern Literature," "Dim Pages in Literary History," and "The South's Reaction To Modernism." The second half of the book contains "discussions" by a group of eminent scholars concerning points and arguments raised in

the papers. It is an excellent book; an invaluable source for any serious student of the South, its literary heritage and promise. The Appendix contains a list of topics for further research. And as Allen Tate has said, "As a guide to future study and writing, the work is indispensable; it literally covers everything." This book belongs in every college, high school, and public library. Both editors are professors of English at Chapel Hill.

HENRY G. HOOD, JR. *The Public Career of John Archdale (1642-1717)*. (Greensboro: The North Carolina Friends Historical Society and The Quaker Collection-Guilford College Library, 1976), 48 pp. Order from the publisher.

This slender volume is the first publication of the North Carolina Friends Historical Society. Written by a member of the history faculty of Guilford College, it is devoted to the public career of the only Quaker governor of the Carolinas during the colonial era. Professor Hood's thesis is that John Archdale was the "outstanding governor of the Carolinas under the proprietorship." Not that Archdale solved a host of problems; he did not. Rather, as governor he faced up to these problems and by his own plans and energies demonstrated how they could eventually be solved. Hood sheds light on Archdale's relationship with the Colonial Assembly, the native Indian population, and with the Spanish and French people living in the colony. Perhaps most importantly, Hood discusses Archdale's efforts to initiate policies that would treat political and religious dissenters fairly.

The book is carefully researched and documented; a brief but helpful bibliography is included. Historians interested in religious groups during the colonial era will find it useful. On sale from the Quaker Collection of Guilford College for \$2.00, it is another valuable addition to the grad-

ual accumulation of information about North Carolina during its earliest days.

JOSEPH S. FERRELL (ed.). *County Government in North Carolina*, Revised Edition. (Chapel Hill: Institute of Government, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1975), 441 pp. charts, graphs, statistics.

About thirty years ago a major textbook in state and local government referred to county government as the "wasteland of American politics." No more; and this book explains why. It is an exhaustive study; a series of essays on almost every aspect of county government and administration in North Carolina. Written by members of the faculty of the Institute of Government, the essays cover everything from the judicial system to recreation and public libraries. It describes the structure of county government and explains in considerable detail the changing and expanding functions of the myriad of agencies and commissions operating under county authority. One of its more important contributions is its careful analysis of the importance and functions of county commissioners. This book is an invaluable research tool for anyone studying county government in North Carolina. It should have an index; but its topical organization compensates to some extent for this omission. All college, high school, and public libraries should have a copy.

C. HORACE HAMILTON. *North Carolina Population Trends: A Demographic Sourcebook*. 3 volumes. (Chapel Hill: Carolina Population Center, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1975).

These three volumes have been prepared and published under the auspices of the Office of State Planning, State of North Carolina. They are valuable sourcebooks for information about the people of the

state: where they live, how they live, and what they do, where they come from and where they go. North Carolina is a state caught up in the process of change — especially demographic change. And demographic changes represent important elements in the kind of society that is coming into being. Studies such as this are essential to rational and controlled planning — the kind of planning necessary if the future of North Carolina is to remain free of the kind of blight that has lowered the quality of life in other sections of the nation.

Volume I provides a broad, general portrait of the state's population; Volume II deals more specifically with the family, population change, and migrations; Volume III concerns the economics of population change, projections of the future, and policy planning. Although these volumes are almost entirely statistical in nature, they do contain interpretative essays and explanations which make them useful for laymen. Public libraries and high school libraries should have them available; college and university libraries cannot, of course, afford not to have them. The author is an associate director of the Carolina Population Center, and has held professorships at N. C. State and Chapel Hill.

FRANCIS PLEDGER HULME. *Mountain Measure: A Southern Appalachian Verse Notebook*. (Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1975). Photographs by Robert Amberg. Order from the publisher.

This is the first book of poetry published by the Appalachian Consortium Press. None of the entries have appeared previously in print; however, the author has published another book of poems, *Come Up The Valley*, published by the Rutgers University Press in 1949.

Collections of poetry committed to a single theme have their place; but they

suffer from a weakness that perhaps is unavoidable. One theme simply can't sustain a consistency and a quality of writing that can be defined as poetic throughout. This volume — committed to capturing the life of the hills and the hill folk — seems particularly susceptible to this weakness. Many of the entries, and there are over fifty, come over more as stories and observations arranged in the form of blank verse. As stories and notes they capture the flavor of Appalachian life well enough, but after laying the book aside one doesn't have the feeling of having read much poetry. There are exceptions; there is poetry here, and some of it is quite moving. Hulme does not shy away from traditional forms and rhyme. And he has the guts to use quatrains in sequence; an indication, no doubt, of his age, good sense,

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and scholarship. Some are a bit strained, but I salute him for refusing to abandon the traditional for the formlessness of the modern vogue.

As a notebook on Appalachian life this volume is valuable; it should be in all North Carolina collections, especially those with a concern for mountain lore. As a book of poetry its quality is mixed; in this sense, it has much company.

JOHN MOSES PIPKIN. *Half-After Love*. (Durham: Moore Publishing Company, 1975). \$6.95.

This is John Pipkin's second book of poems; it is another addition to Moore Publishing Company's growing list of books by North Carolina poets. Pipkin's poems range widely in content, style, and form — following, it seems, the poet's musings over a period of years. In this sense, it is a record of what one man has seen, felt, and thought about things that matter to him. Contrary to what is often the case — and to Pipkin's credit — it is not a book of poems that an author has consciously set out to write.

A poet sees and feels the same things that others see and feel; but in different ways. And he is able — for reasons that no one really understands — to reach out and grasp the essence of what has happened to him and record it in language, used in a different way. Pipkin's poems have *something* to say to the reader. What he wants to say is not always clear, because in many entries he keeps his secrets to himself — deliberately so, it seems. This forces the reader to read, reread, and then read the poems again. In doing this the ideas become clear, and the quality of the lines is revealed. The poems range from the light to the serious; all are challenging to read, some are quite moving. For my part, I especially liked the closing lines of a poem entitled "Descent From Olympus." I formed her stronger/than I

knew/ now she the forger/ turns her flame/
to cauterize my soul/ and I have learned
that hell/ is loving what I can't control.

In reading poetry too many of us are governed by our own taste — praising or rejecting the poet's work on the strength of what pleases us. All well and good — nothing is going to change that. But we should try to grasp the meaning of what the poet expresses, and appreciate the word-skills he uses to do so. Pipkin's poems score well on both counts; this volume deserve a wide readership.

Notations

HENRY W. LEWIS. *The Property Tax in North Carolina: An Introduction*, rev. ed. (Chapel Hill: Institute of Government, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1975). Covers everything from the collection, administration and use of property taxes in North Carolina; valuable list of source material. Anyone concerned with the "issue" of property tax should not be without this little volume.

ERNEST MORGAN (ed.). *A Manual of Death Education and Simple Burial*. Burnsville: The Celo Press, 1975). Everything you need to know about death and burial; especially valuable for those who seek to avoid the complexity and costs of the "American Way of Death." \$1.50. Order from the publisher.

Historic Buildings and Landmarks of Chapel Hill, N. C. (Chapel Hill: The Chapel Hill Historical Society, 1975). Pictures and short essays about historical buildings on the university campus and in the town; index and maps. Valuable memento for "old grads" and the host of others who love Chapel Hill. Order from the publisher: Box 503, Franklin Street Station, Chapel Hill, N. C. 27514.