



Novels by Author

Alice Adams. *A Southern Exposure*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.

At the end of the Great Depression, Harry and Cynthia Baird and their 11-year-old daughter move from Connecticut to Pinehill, N.C., a fictional town probably based on Chapel Hill. Hoping to escape debt, drinking problems, and past mistakes, the family is plunged into small town southern culture. The novel traces their attempts to fit in to a tightly woven community.

Alice Adams. *After the War*. New York: Knopf, 2000.

This novel, Adams's last, continues the story of the Baird family begun in *A Southern Exposure*. The story is set in the period during and immediately after World War II in the fictional Piedmont town of Pinehill. In tracing a number of crises, large and small, Adams portrays a large and diverse cast of characters and gives special attention to the details of domestic life in North Carolina in the 1940s.

Sheila Kay Adams. *My Old True Love*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin, 2004.

Narrator Arty Norton looks back on her rough life in the North Carolina mountains in the mid nineteenth-century. Set in the fictional mountain town of Sodom, N.C., Arty focuses on the years leading up to the Civil War, when her brother Hackley and their orphaned cousin Larkin are growing up. The two boys fall in love with the same girl, but romance is quickly pushed aside when the war begins. Adams, a successful folk singer, accentuates the story with passages from old mountain ballads.

Daphne Athas. *Entering Ephesus*. New York: Viking, 1971.

The Bishop family has fallen on hard times. Forced to leave their large and comfortable house in Connecticut, they move to the small, provincial town of Ephesus, a fictional Piedmont town based on Chapel Hill. In the midst of the chaos of relocating and adjusting to life in the south, the lively Bishop daughters -- Irene, Urie, and Loco Poco -- are just entering adolescence. Their thoughts and observations enliven the novel, which is set amidst depression and war in the 1930s and 1940s. There is a small community named Ephesus in Davie County, but this novel is clearly set in a Piedmont college town. *Entering Ephesus* won the Sir Walter Raleigh Award for the best work of fiction by a North Carolinian in 1972.

Ellyn Bache. *Activist's Daughter*. Duluth, Minn.: Spinsters Ink, 1997.

In this novel set amidst the Civil Rights protests of the early 1960s, Beryl Rosinsky has graduated from high school and is anxious to get away from her activist mother and her hometown of Washington, D.C. She enrolls at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she finds a different world -- conservative, Southern, and with long-standing campus cliques firmly established. Beryl is gradually drawn into local Civil Rights protests, which are may be based on actual demonstrations by UNC students against segregated businesses in Chapel Hill. As a result of her own political awakening, Beryl ends up with a deeper understanding and appreciation of her mother.

Ellyn Bache. *Riggs Park*. New York: Harlequin Next, 2005.

When Barbara is diagnosed with cancer, she calls on her lifelong best friend Marilyn for support. Marilyn has problems of her own, but pushes these aside and rushes to Washington, D.C. Together the two women explore their friendship and their past, uncovering along the way secrets from their childhood together in the Washington suburb of Riggs Park. Although most of the novel is set in the Washington area, it begins and ends at Marilyn's home in Wrightsville Beach.

Mignon F. Ballard. *Angel Whispered Danger: An Augusta Goodnight Mystery*. New York: St. Martin's, 2003.

Kate McBride expected to spend her family reunion in the fictional mountain town of Bishop's Bridge, N.C. dodging prying questions about her conspicuously absent husband and the state of their marriage. But the family is quickly distracted when the host's housekeeper falls into a ravine and whispers just before she dies that she was pushed. Kate sets out to find the killer, helped by two unlikely accomplices: the friendly ghost Augusta Goodnight and her trainee angel Penelope. Their investigation leads them into the mysterious past of Kate's uncle Ernest's quirky estate, Bramblewood.

Nancy Bartholomew. *Stand By Your Man*. New York: New York: HarperCollins, 2001.

Maggie Reid, a country music singer based in Greensboro, is questioned by the police when her former husband, the "Satellite Dish and Mobile Home King," disappears. In order to clear herself, Maggie pursues the mystery on her own, becoming involved in the seedy underside of life in Greensboro, where she finds, among other strange personalities, a mysterious group called "The Redneck Mafia."

Doris Betts. *The River to Pickle Beach*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

In the turbulent summer of 1968, Jack and Bebe Sellars take over the management of Pickerel Beach on the North Carolina coast. Hoping for a peaceful, easy summer, their plans are disrupted by the arrival of several difficult people, including a violent, racist former Army buddy of Jack's. The story, though written in third-person, is told from the alternating viewpoints of Bebe and Jack, with the events of the summer triggering memories of their past together. Throughout the novel, the racial violence and volatile national political struggles never seem far from the surface.

Doris Betts. *Souls Raised From the Dead*. New York: Knopf, 1994.

The novel looks into the troubled relationship between Mary Grace Thompson, the teenage daughter of state trooper Frank Thompson, and her estranged mother, Christine. Mary Grace has a life-threatening kidney disease and the story takes us through the emotions and spiritual questioning a family faces during a tragedy. The novel is set in Carrboro, Hillsborough, Durham, Jacksonville, and Chapel Hill at the UNC hospital.

Sally Bissell. *A Darker Justice*. New York: Random House, 2002.

Mary Crow, an Atlanta prosecutor of Cherokee ancestry, is called into action when a violent killer who appears to be targeting federal judges turns his sights on one of her friends. Mary's investigation takes her back to her hometown, the fictional mountain town Little Jump Off, N.C., where she discovers not just a single suspect but an entire group, a right-wing paramilitary organization planning violent attacks on the government. In search of clues, Mary probes the caverns and other hiding places in the rugged wilderness.

Sally Bissell. *Legacy of Masks*. New York: Bantam, 2005.

Mary Crow, a tough prosecutor from Atlanta, has just returned home to North Carolina. After an unsuccessful bid for sheriff of Pisgah County, Crow opens her own practice and sets her thoughts toward a

possible romance with an old flame. Her first case comes quickly. Crow is hired to defend a wealthy local man against charges that he killed a young girl. But the deeper she gets into the case, she becomes worried that the true killer might be the very man she was hired to protect.

Sandra Brown. *Chill Factor*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005.

Lily Burton was just looking for a relaxing break when she left for her cabin near remote Cleary, N.C., a fictional mountain town. But rough weather hits and she ends up snowed in, stranded in the cabin with a man named Ben Tierney, a former acquaintance to whom she offered shelter when she found him hiking nearby. Lily's husband Dutch makes it as far as the town of Cleary, but can't get through the blizzard to the cabin. His search becomes even more desperate when he learns that Ben is a suspect in several recent murders.

Wanda Canada. *Island Murders*. Wilmington, N.C.: Coastal Carolina Press, 2001.

Figure Eight Island, the exclusive resort community near Wilmington, seems an unlikely place for a crime wave, but dead bodies are showing up all over the island. The first suspect is Carroll Davenport, a local developer who has had a few too many friends and relatives who died violent deaths. But Carroll is soon cleared and decides to pursue the case on her own. In the course of investigating the increasingly complicated case, Carroll covers a lot of ground, visiting many sites in the Wilmington area that will be familiar to locals.

Wanda Canada. *Cape Fear Murders*. Wilmington, N.C.: Coastal Carolina Press, 2003.

Carroll Davenport, a local developer who has an unlucky habit of getting drawn into murder investigations, is back on the case when she finds North Carolina State Senator William Burriss III murdered alongside his mistress. The killers may or may not have ties to Carroll's mafioso late husband. With the help of Ben Satterwhite, an FBI agent and possible love interest, Carroll chases criminals all over Wilmington and Wrightsville Beach in this sequel to Canada's 2001 novel *Island Murders*.

Elisa L. Carbone. *Storm Warriors*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001.

Nathan Williams and his grandfather live on Pea Island, on North Carolina's Outer Banks, in 1895. Nathan is fascinated by the "surfmens," the African American rescue crew at the United States Life-Saving Station. Nathan dreams of joining them and spends all of his free time observing the surfmen and studying their books. Over the course of the novel, Nathan experiences the harsh injustice of racism, participates in a daring rescue, and begins to learn that there may be a better life for him beyond the island. Although written for a younger audience, this novel gives a wealth of detail about the surfmen based on research on the real-life rescue crew.

Jimmy Carter. *The Hornet's Nest: A Novel of the Revolutionary War*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003.

Former President Jimmy Carter's first novel (and the first novel to be published by an ex-President) follows Ethan Pratt and his family through the Southern colonies during the American Revolution. When things turn bad in Georgia, Pratt migrates to North Carolina in search of cheap land and opportunity. Carter's thorough research is evident in his descriptions of the Regulator movement in Orange County and the battle of King's Mountain.

Diane Chamberlain. *Her Mother's Shadow*. Don Mills, Ont.: Mira Books, 2004.

Lacey O'Neill grew up in a small community on the Outer Banks, trying to live up to the memory of her mother, who was murdered when Lacey was thirteen. Now in her mid-twenties, Lacey is suddenly thrust into a mother's role, when she agrees to become the guardian of Mackenzie, the daughter of Lacey's best friend who was killed tragically in a car accident. As the two struggle to overcome the tragedy and get to know each other, Lacey finds herself with feelings for both a local man who may be Mackenzie's father,

and the lawyer who has just arrived in town to work on a case. The novel is set in the fictional coastal town of Kiss River.

Fred Chappell. *I Am One of You Forever*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987.

Set in the North Carolina mountains in the 1940s, this novel-in-stories follows a boy named Jess through his daily life and encounters with his quirky family and neighbors. The book is a series of short pieces about the memorable characters Jess and his family encounter, and the land on which they live. Chappell is an award-winning poet and is noted for the lyricism he brings to his prose.

Martin Clark. *The Many Aspects of Mobile Home Living*. New York: Knopf, 2000.

When Judge Martin Wheeler agrees to help the no-good brother of a friend who's up on a drug charge, he is quickly sucked into the lives of a group of oddball characters on a mission to recover a bounty of stolen cash. Set in the fictional Piedmont town of Norton, N.C., near Winston-Salem, the novel follows Wheeler and his strange new friends through the seedy underside of contemporary southern life.

Patricia Cornwell. *Hornet's Nest*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1996.

Best-selling novelist Patricia Cornwell sets this mystery in Charlotte, "a city of ambition and change." During an especially hot summer in the Queen City, a number of tourists are gruesomely murdered, and all are left with the same mark of an hourglass on their bodies. A serial killer is clearly at work. Police chief Judy Hammer and her deputy Virginia West battle city politics while they work with young *Charlotte Observer* reporter Andy Brazil to uncover the facts of the case. As the police procedural unfolds, Cornwell describes the physical and cultural landscape of North Carolina's largest city.

Kurt Corriher. *Someone to Kill*. New York: St. Martin's, 2002.

When John Pavlak's wife is murdered, he isn't satisfied to just sit back and let somebody else handle the investigation. Especially when he becomes a suspect himself. Pavlak is a decorated veteran of the Vietnam conflict, and the athletic director at a small college that sounds a lot like Davidson. He races to keep just ahead of the police, following the investigation to Berlin when it looks like his wife's work as an investigative journalist may have led to the discovery of sensitive Cold War secrets. In the end, the trail leads him right back to North Carolina.

Blake Crouch, *Locked Doors*. New York: St. Martin's, 2005.

Andrew Thomas is hiding out in Alaska, framed for a crime he didn't commit. But he can't lay low forever. When people close to him start disappearing and there is a killing spree in his home town of Davidson, N.C., Thomas is forced out of hiding, certain that one of his old enemies is on the loose. Thomas returns to North Carolina and chases the bad guys all the way to a dramatic showdown on Ocracoke Island.

Jeffery Deaver. *The Empty Chair*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

Lincoln Rhyme, a quadriplegic forensic investigator (and protagonist of Deaver's 1997 novel *The Bone Collector*), is in fictional Paquenoque County, N.C., where he is to undergo an experimental operation that may restore his mobility. Rhyme's plans quickly change when a local sheriff comes to ask for his help on a series of murders involving a creepy teenager known as the "Insect Boy." Paquenoque County is near the Great Dismal Swamp and is the location of Tanner's Corner, known mysteriously as the "town without children."

Virginia DeBerry and Donna Grant. *Far From the Tree*. New York: St. Martin's, 2001.

Sisters Celeste English and Ronnie Frazier are surprised to learn, after their father's death, that they have inherited an old house in fictional Prosper, N.C. They had no idea that the house even belonged to the family, and decide to check it out for themselves before they sell it. The house turns out to have important connections to the family, and as

Celeste and Ronnie explore the house and Prosper, they uncover old family secrets, and learn a great deal about their mother's troubled past.

Mark de Castrique. *Dangerous Undertaking*. Scottsdale, Ariz.: Poisoned Pen Press, 2003.

Barry Clayton wasn't thrilled about leaving the Charlotte, N.C. police force to take over the family funeral home back in Gainesboro, a fictional town in the North Carolina mountains. But at least, he thought, he was leaving the dangers of big-city police work behind him. He was wrong. At the graveside service for a beloved local woman, her young grandson roars onto the scene with his rifle blasting, killing two mourners and wounding Barry. The shooter flees for the hills and local cops, assisted by Barry, get on the case, which boils down to a hot dispute between family members over the deceased woman's estate.

Peter T. Deutermann. *Cat Dancers*. New York: St. Martin's, 2005.

When two murderers are released on a technicality, the citizens of fictional Manceford County, N.C. are irate. Some of them are so mad that they're taking justice into their own hands. A gruesome video surfaces, showing the execution of one of the killers, and officer Cam Richter has to find the vigilantes before they kill again. Richter tracks them into the mountains of western North Carolina, home of the elusive eastern mountain lion.

Jude Deveraux. *Wild Orchids*. New York: Atria Books, 2003.

Ford Newcombe, a successful mystery writer, has moved to the fictional mountain town of Cole Creek, North Carolina to investigate a series of mysterious deaths. He enlists the help of Jackie Maxwell, whose premonitions prove to be key to the case. As they dig deeper into the stories and myths, Ford and Jackie find that the devil himself may be behind the crimes.

Pamela Duncan. *Moon Women*. New York: Delacorte Press, 2001.

The "Moon women" are three generations of women of the Moon family in western North Carolina. Ruth Ann Moon's life changes suddenly when her mother and her daughter move in with her. Her mother, the family matriarch Marvelle Moon, is beginning to show the frailties of her age, while her daughter Ashley is three months pregnant, unmarried, and just out of rehab. The novel unfolds over the course of Ashley's pregnancy as each of the women adjusts to life together, and to their changing roles in the family.

Pamela Duncan. *Plant Life*. New York: Delacorte Press, 2003.

This novel is largely the story of a group of women who work in the textile mill in the fictional Piedmont town of Russell, N.C. The town and its residents are seen through the fresh perspective of newly divorced Laurel Granger, who has returned to Russell after fifteen years in Las Vegas. As Laurel struggles to cope with her aging mother and begins to find romance again, she is comforted by the friendship and understanding of the women she works alongside at the mill. *Plant Life* won the 2003 Sir Walter Raleigh award for the best work of fiction by a North Carolina author.

Tony Earley. *Jim the Boy*. Boston: Little, Brown, 2000.

Jim is a ten-year-old boy who lives with his mother and her brothers and is just beginning to come to grips with the adult world. The story is set in the fictional southwestern North Carolina town of Aliceville in the 1930s and follows Jim through everyday events as he struggles to understand his family, friends, and through their stories, himself. Aliceville is probably based on Rutherfordton, N.C.

Clyde Edgerton. *Lunch at the Piccadilly*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin, 2003.

At the heart of this book is the relationship between Carl Turnage, a middle-aged bachelor, and his Aunt Lil, but much of the novel is given to a lively group portrait of Lil and her friends at the Rosehaven

Convalescence Center, a nursing home in the fictional eastern North Carolina town of Listre. Listre has been the setting of several of Edgerton's books.

Clyde Edgerton. *Raney*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 1985.

Raney Bell discovers, a little too late, that she didn't know her fiancé Charles Shepherd as well as she thought. This novel is a chronicle of the first two years of their marriage as the innocent and cheerful Raney and the moderately worldly Charles quarrel about religion, race, sex, and family as they adjust to life together. Raney has a funny, distinctive, and unapologetically Southern narrative voice. The novel is set in the fictional eastern North Carolina town of Listre.

Clyde Edgerton. *Where Trouble Sleeps*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin, 1997.

Jack Umstead is a professional con man and a fugitive from the law. When he first shows up here, he has just arrived in the small town of Listre, N.C., where he's working on an elaborate scheme, but first, he must earn the trust of the residents. The story is told by a number of narrators, including Umstead himself and some of the people he has taken in. The result is a full and comic portrait of Listre, a fictional town in eastern North Carolina, which is the setting for several of Edgerton's novels.

Jonathan Farlow. *Brouhaha*. Boone, N.C.: Parkway Publishers, 2005.

The mayoral election in the fictional Piedmont town of Ashewood Falls has the whole town astir. Everything was proceeding smoothly in the decidedly quirky town until a bowling alley argument led to the entry of a new candidate in the race. Incumbent Johnston "Birddog" Farley is faced with an unexpected challenge from Purdie Mae Pearce, the "fried chicken queen." As befits a modern election, this one is filled with scandal. There are allegations of adultery, suspicions of electoral fraud, and a bevy of special interest groups clamoring for attention.

Anderson Ferrell. *Have You Heard*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2004.

As *Have You Heard* opens, Jerry Chiffon is dressed in woman's clothing and pointing a gun at a well-known conservative North Carolina senator. The story of Chiffon's life unfolds as several narrators, all residents of the fictional Eastern North Carolina town of Branch Creek, struggle to understand what has happened. Chiffon felt uncomfortable as a gay man in a small, conservative community and left for New York as soon as he could. He has just returned home to recover from the death of a lover when he makes his attempt on the life of the senator. Ferrell is from Black Creek, in Wilson County.

Annie Flannigan. *Love and a Bad Hair Day*. New York: HarperCollins, 2003.

The Hadleys and the O'Malleys had been feuding for years in Verbena, N.C., a small, fictional town in the mountains. Things look like they're beginning to thaw when Ryman O'Malley moves back to town to take over the family business, the South Winds Trav'O'Tel, famed for its all-day breakfast buffet. Jolene Hadley Corbett, whose beauty parlor is located just across the street, is determined at first to continue the feud, especially when she learns of Ryman's plans to demolish the Trav'O'Tel, a local landmark. But as she gets to know him better, her feelings turn in quite a different direction.

Elizabeth Flock. *Me & Emma*. Mira Books, 2005.

Carrie Parker, the eight-year-old narrator of this novel, does not have an easy life. She and her sister Emma live in a poor family in Toast, N.C. Their father has recently passed away and their new stepfather is abusive to both girls, becoming especially violent when drunk. Carrie's mother sees the problems, but can't afford to leave, and the girls are left with seemingly nowhere else to turn.

Gwynne Forster. *Blues from Down Deep*. New York: Kensington, 2004.

Regina Pearson never really felt at home in Hawaii, especially after her father passed away and she had no family left in the islands. When she learns about relatives in New Bern, N.C., she heads off to find them, excited about meeting the extended family she's never known. Although she meets many colorful characters, Regina finds a group of people with troubles of their own, hardly the warm embrace she'd expected. It isn't until she gets to know a retired soldier named Justin Duval that she decides she might have a reason for staying.

Charles Frazier. *Cold Mountain*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1997.

Cold Mountain is the story of Inman, a deserter from the Confederate Army, and his long journey home to the mountains of North Carolina during the last year of the Civil War. The novel alternates between Inman's struggles and those of Ada, who is at home near Cold Mountain and is able to get by only with the help of Ruby, a mountain woman unafraid to fend for herself. *Cold Mountain* has been praised for its accuracy in portraying geographical and horticultural details, as well as the particulars of nineteenth-century life in the North Carolina mountains.

Philip Gerard. *Cape Fear Rising*. Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1994.

When Sam Jenks and his wife Gray Ellen move from Chicago to Wilmington, N.C. in August 1898, they find a city in turmoil. Amidst a vicious, racist political campaign, a group of white citizens begin to mobilize against the city's large African American population. Based on the actual events of the November 1898 Wilmington riot that led to the murder of many African Americans and the violent overthrow of the city's government, Gerard dramatizes one of the most significant periods in North Carolina history.

Kaye Gibbons. *A Virtuous Woman*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin, 1989.

Ruby Pitt Woodrow and Blinking Jack Stokes tell, in alternating chapters, the stories of their lives. Ruby's chapters are told from her perspective as she is dying of cancer at age 45, while Jack's reminiscences are set during the period just after Ruby's death. These stories are set largely on tobacco farms in eastern North Carolina and describe a fondly remembered marriage, which stands in contrast to the characters' otherwise difficult lives.

Kaye Gibbons. *Divining Women*. New York: Putnam, 2004.

Mary Oliver travels from Washington, D.C. to her hometown, the fictional Elm City, N.C., to spend time with her aunt Maureen in the fall of 1918 with the nation at war and a deadly flu pandemic sweeping the country. Maureen's troubles, it turns out, are much more immediate. Her cold and cruel husband has reduced her to a quiet and cowering existence and Mary takes it upon herself to save her aunt. Drawing from the example of strong women in the family's history, and with the help of caring relatives, Mary and Maureen plan their escape.

Marianne Gingher. *Bobby Rex's Greatest Hit*. New York: Ballantine, 1986.

Everyone in the small town of Orfax, N.C. is astir when local rock-and-roller Bobby Rex hits the big time with his song "Pally Thompson." The only one who isn't thrilled about it is Pally Thompson, who insists that she didn't go nearly as far with Bobby Rex as the song would suggest. Set in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the novel follows Pally's attempts to redeem her reputation, but is in effect a rich portrait of adolescent small town life in the postwar South. Fictional Orfax is about twenty miles from Greensboro, the author's hometown. *Bobby Rex's Greatest Hit* won the 1987 Sir Walter Raleigh award for the best work of fiction by a North Carolinian.

Gail Godwin. *Evensong*. New York: Ballantine, 1999.

Evensong, a sequel to the 1991 novel *Father Melancholy's Daughter*, continues the story of Margaret Gower, an Episcopal rector in High Balsam, N.C., a fictional community in the Blue Ridge Mountains, not far from Mountain City, based on Asheville, where Godwin grew up. Set over a four-week period in 1999, *Evensong* chronicles a difficult time in Gower's life as she questions both her marriage and her faith.

Judy Goldman. *The Slow Way Back*. New York: William Morrow, 1999.

Thea McKee is a woman with a successful radio call-in show in Charlotte, N.C., when she receives in the mail a packet of letters written by her grandmother more than 60 years ago. As she seeks help understanding the letters -- they are written in Yiddish -- Thea reflects upon three generations of her Southern Jewish family. The letters ultimately reveal family secrets that allow Thea to resolve long unanswered questions about her childhood. *The Slow Way Back* won the 2000 Sir Walter Raleigh Award for the best work of fiction by a North Carolina writer.

Judy Goldman. *Early Leaving*. New York: HarperCollins, 2004.

The night he graduates from a prestigious private high school in Charlotte, N.C., valedictorian Early Smallwood shoots and kills an African American teenager. This novel follows Early's mother Kathryne as she tries to understand the events of that night and reflects on Early's childhood, wondering if there was something she could have done in order to prevent the tragedy.

Allan Gurganus. *Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All*. New York: Knopf, 1989.

Ninety-nine year old Lucy Marsden spins an epic tale that covers the Civil War, slavery, marriage, and death. With an energetic and humorous style, she tells the story of her remarkable life. Married at fifteen to a Confederate veteran thirty-five years her senior, Lucy has survived long enough to be the oldest living Confederate widow. The novel alternates between past and present, telling the story of Captain Marsden's experiences in the war, Lucy's childhood, her close friendship with a former slave, and her life at present, where she is living in a nursing home in fictional Falls, N.C., a town in the eastern part of the state probably based on the author's hometown of Rocky Mount.

James W. Hall. *Forests of the Night*. New York: St. Martin's, 2005

Miami detective Charlotte Monroe takes off for the mountains of western North Carolina in pursuit of her daughter, who has run off with the man at number eight on the FBI's most wanted list. Charlotte and her husband quickly become entangled in a mystery that has its roots in the history of the region, and seems to be tied to the fate of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

Homer Hickham. *The Keeper's Son*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2003.

The tiny, fictional island of Killakeet, on North Carolina's outer banks, is shaken when German U-Boats appear off the coast in 1941. Coast Guard Lt. Josh Thurlow, the son of the keeper of the lighthouse, takes it upon himself to protect his home. Leading an ill-equipped bunch of locals, Thurlow takes to the sea. The novel follows the emotional struggles of Thurlow and his father and also gives detailed descriptions of submarine warfare during World War II.

Lynne Hinton. *The Last Odd Day*. New York: Harper, 2004.

In the opening section of *The Last Odd Day*, Jean Witherspoon is struggling to cope with the death of her husband. The novel alternates between Jean's past and present. When she learns a surprising secret about her husband, Jean delves into her own history, recalling her stillborn daughter, the deaths of her siblings when she was young, and her traumatic upbringing in a poor Appalachian family.

Kay Hooper. *Hunting Fear*. New York: Bantam Books, 2004.

Lucas Jordan is a successful profiler for the FBI, using his psychic abilities to track down missing people. When a string of grisly murders hit Golden, N.C., a fictional mountain town, Lucas is called to the case. The psychopathic killer keeps Lucas guessing throughout the book, and raises the stakes when he turns his sights on people close to the detective.

Josephine Humphreys. *Nowhere Else on Earth*. New York: Viking, 2000.

Set in Robeson County in the final days of the Civil War, sixteen-year-old Rhoda Lawson tells the story of the last desperate struggle to resist the Union Army. General William Tecumseh Sherman's army was on its way, and the local Home Guard was rounding up everyone they could for the fight. The local Lumbee Indians, however, wanted no part in a war whose aims they had opposed. When Henry Berry Lowrie comes to help Rhoda's brothers hide from the Home Guard, she falls in love with him, and leaves to live with the outlaws. Lowrie is an actual historical figure, and the events of this novel are based in part on his life.

Robert Inman. *Captain Saturday*. Boston: Little, Brown, 2002.

Captain Saturday is the story of Will Baggett, a popular television weatherman in Raleigh, whose life begins to crumble when in a short span of time he loses his job, his wife leaves him, and he's arrested for a crime he didn't commit. Baggett escapes from his sophisticated life in the Triangle to visit family in rural Brunswick County where he begins his recovery by delving into his past. The book provides an excellent portrait of life in contemporary Raleigh, commenting on the city's struggles with development and the often contentious relationship between new arrivals and the denizens of "old Raleigh."

Roberta Isleib. *Fairway to Heaven*. New York: Penguin, 2005.

Pro golfer Cassie Burdette has a lot to do when she arrives in Pinehurst, N.C., site of both her best friend's wedding and a prestigious golf tournament. Her on-again off-again boyfriend Mike Callahan is in town, too, and it looks like she'll be seeing plenty of him as he's a member of the wedding party and her partner in the tournament. As if that wasn't enough to worry about, there are a serious of murders in town, which may be linked to the mysterious disappearance of the father of the bride. Burdette is quickly on the case.

Michael Grant Jaffe. *Whirlwind*. New York: Norton, 2004.

Lucas Proudly is a weatherman in the fictional coastal town of Bentleyville. His career is going nowhere, and his only romantic prospect -- the bartender at a local strip club -- shows no sign of returning his affections. Then Hurricane Isabel hits the state. Lucas's beachfront coverage is shown nationwide and his apparent death is captured on film. But Lucas survives, emerging from a wrecked building several days later to find himself an instant celebrity.

Jan Karon. The Mitford Novels.

At Home in Mitford. New York: Penguin, 1994.

A Light in the Window. New York: Penguin, 1995.

In These High, Green Hills. New York: Viking, 1996.

Out to Canaan. New York: Viking 1997.

A New Song. New York: Viking, 1999.

A Common Life. New York: Penguin, 2002.

In This Mountain. New York: Viking, 2002.

The small village of Mitford, N.C., a fictional town based on Blowing Rock, is the setting for these popular novels. Father Tim Kavanagh, the village rector and aging protagonist of the books, encounters in each novel the quirky residents of the town in all of their glory. Although Father Tim is off on a different

adventure in each book, the underlying theme of all is a heartfelt appreciation for the simple pleasures of small town life.

Terry Kay. *The Valley of Light*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003.

In the years after World War II, Noah Locke wandered from town to town, fishing, doing occasional work, and reflecting on the horrors he had seen throughout the war, especially when his unit liberated the concentration camp at Dachau. When Noah arrived in the fictional town of Bowersville, N.C. (based on the area around Hayesville), in an area known as the "Valley of Light," he was taken by the slow small-town pace and friendly residents. Noah begins to date a young widow and enters a local fishing contest with the goal of landing a mythical, elusive bass that has captivated the town for years.

Susan S. Kelly. *Even Now*. New York: Warner Books, 2001.

Hannah Marsh is excited by her family's move from Durham to fictional Rural Ridge, N.C., near Asheville. Her husband has taken a less stressful job, the scenery is beautiful, and she's looking forward to spending her free time in the garden. Hannah is surprised to find that Daintry O'Connor, a close friend from childhood is also living in the area. Hannah and Daintry had a complicated relationship growing up, and these complications only continue in adulthood as Hannah finds herself increasingly attracted to Daintry's husband.

Toni L.P. Kelner. *The Laura Fleming Mysteries*.

Down Home Murder. New York: Kensington, 1993.

Dead Ringer. New York: Kensington, 1994.

Trouble Looking for a Place to Happen. New York: Kensington, 1995.

Country Comes to Town. New York: Kensington, 1996.

Tight as a Tick. New York: Kensington, 1998.

Death of a Damn Yankee. New York: Kensington, 1999.

Mad as the Dickens. New York: Kensington, 2001.

Wed and Buried. New York: Kensington, 2003.

Laura Fleming is a computer programmer living in Boston with her husband, a Shakespeare professor at a local college. In nearly all of these novels (with the exception of *Country Comes to Town*) Laura travels to her hometown of Byerly, N.C., a fictional town in the western part of the state, and when she does, trouble breaks out. Time after time Laura's amateur detective skills are called into play as she gets to the bottom of a murder. In between chasing criminals, Laura introduces her husband to the South. Kelner describes Byerly as "based on my memories and knowledge of Southern mill towns like Granite Falls, Conover, and Dudley Shoals. If it were real, it would be near Hickory, NC, with its own exit off Highway 321."

Randall Kenan. *A Visitation of Spirits*. New York: Grove, 1989.

Kenan's acclaimed first novel is the story of an African American family in the fictional town of Tims Creek in rural eastern North Carolina. Horace Cross, the sixteen-year-old protagonist of the book, is haunted by what may be actual demons, while at the same time trying to come to terms with his homosexuality. He seeks advice and comfort from his older cousin James, a schoolteacher and preacher, who fears that other family members will have a hard time understanding. This richly written novel is told in several shifting voices and styles.

Catherine Landis. *Some Days There's Pie*. New York: St. Martins, 2002.

When Ruth Ritchie's marriage falls apart, she flees Tennessee and ends up in the fictional eastern North Carolina town of Lawsonville. (There is a real Lawsonville in Stokes County near the Virginia border, but this is clearly not the one that Landis describes). Ruth, who has just turned twenty, is having a hard time getting by until she meets eighty-year-old Rose. Rose helps Ruth get a job at the local paper and the two become fast friends. Although Rose is facing lung cancer she is still feisty, and sees something of her

younger self in Ruth. The two women throw themselves into the Lawsonville scene, engaging the oddball local characters and living life to the fullest.

Vicki Lane. *Signs in the Blood*. New York: Dell, 2005.

Elizabeth Goodweather runs a small herb and flower farm in the fictional mountain town of Ridley Branch, N.C. Recently widowed, and with both of her children moved away, Elizabeth is feeling a little lonely and bored, but that quickly changes when she's dragged into a local mystery. When a neighbor's son is found dead, the police determine it was an accident, but the boy's mother isn't convinced. As Elizabeth pursues the case, she digs up evidence of a long ago crime that is suspiciously similar to the current mysterious death.

Joyce Lavene and Jim Lavene. *The Sharyn Howard Mysteries*.

Last Dance. New York: Avalon Books, 1999.

One Last Goodbye. New York: Avalon Books, 2000.

The Last to Remember. New York: Avalon Books, 2001.

Until Our Last Embrace. New York: Avalon Books, 2001.

For the Last Time. New York: Avalon Books, 2002.

Dreams Don't Last. New York: Avalon Books, 2002.

Last Fires Burning. New York: Avalon Books, 2003.

Glory's Last Victim. New York: Avalon Books, 2004.

Last Rites. New York: Avalon Books, 2004.

Last One Down. New York: Avalon Books, 2005.

Sharyn Howard is the sheriff in fictional Diamond Springs, N.C., a picturesque town in the Uwharrie Mountains. In each novel, Sharyn is on the case of a local murder that bears an eerie resemblance to, and usually proves to be connected to, a long-unsolved crime.

Joyce Lavene and Jim Lavene. *Pretty Poison*. New York: Penguin, 2005.

Peggy Lee, a botanist and owner of a garden shop in Charlotte, N.C., comes to work one day to find one of the richest men in town sprawled across her plants with his head bashed in. The police nab a homeless man for the crime, but Peggy doesn't think he did it. The problem is, if she finds evidence to free the current suspect, then the next most likely killer is one of Peggy's employees, whom she's sure had nothing to do with the murder. Peggy dives into the investigation, digging through the dead man's past in search of a possible killer. As she combs through the evidence, she's assisted by a younger man who may prove to be more than a friend.

Fred Leebron. *Six Figures*. New York: Knopf, 2000.

Warner Lutz and his young family have just moved to booming, affluent Charlotte, N.C., but they have yet to benefit from the largesse around them. Walter's job is unsatisfying and he often takes out his frustrations on his family. When his wife is attacked by an unidentified assailant, Walter becomes a suspect in the crime. *Six Figures* is a compelling portrait of twenty-first century isolation and evidence that even in a bustling New South city, not everyone is thriving.

Sally MacLeod. *Passing Strange*. New York: Random House, 2002.

Claudia Isham, concerned about her appearance her whole life, is presented with a chance to start over when she and her husband move to the fictional town of Beasley, N.C. Claudia has plastic surgery and arrives in Beasley with a new face to match her new life. Life in the South proves to be a difficult adjustment for the Ishams. They encounter casual racism in their acquaintances, which is manifested when the town discovers that Claudia has been having an affair with her African American gardener. There is a dramatic twist when Claudia's husband is found murdered and her lover is accused of the crime.

Michael Malone. *The Justin and Cuddy Novels*.

Uncivil Seasons. New York: Delacorte Press, 1983.

Time's Witness. Boston: Little, Brown, 1989.

First Lady. Naperville, Ill.: Sourcebooks, 2001.

Justin Savile V and Cuddy Mangum and police officers in the fictional town of Hillston, N.C., a small college town described as "A Bright Star in the Flag of the New South." All of these novels are filled with funny observations about Hillston and its citizens and provide an honest look at the continuing clash between contemporary southerners and the traditions and ideals of the Old South.

Doug Marlette. *The Bridge*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001.

Pick Cantrell, a successful but controversial editorial cartoonist, has just moved from New York to his hometown in North Carolina. In the course of adjusting to his new life, Cantrell learns about his family's connections to area's rich textile history, most notably his grandmother Lucy's involvement in a mill workers' strike in the 1930s. The novel is set in the fictional town of Eno, North Carolina, most likely based on Hillsborough, and includes scenes in Chapel Hill.

Margaret Maron. *Last Lessons of Summer*. New York: Mysterious Press, 2003.

After her grandmother is murdered, Amy Steadman returns from New York to her family's farm, located southeast of Raleigh, to help sort through her grandmother's belongings. As Amy digs through her family history she tries to understand not just her grandmother's mysterious death, but also the death of her mother, who committed suicide when Amy was three. The relationships among the members of this large family are at the heart of the story, especially as Amy begins to believe that her grandmother's murderer may be a relative.

Margaret Maron. *The Judge Deborah Knott Mysteries*.

Bootlegger's Daughter. New York: Mysterious Press, 1992.

Southern Discomfort. New York: Mysterious Press, 1993.

Shooting at Loons. New York: Mysterious Press, 1994.

Up Jumps the Devil. New York: Mysterious Press, 1996.

Home Fires. New York: Mysterious Press, 1998.

Storm Track. New York: Mysterious Press, 2000.

Uncommon Clay. New York: Warner Books, 2001.

Slow Dollar. New York: Mysterious Press, 2002.

High Country Fall. New York: Warner Books, 2004.

Rituals of the Season. New York: Warner Books, 2005.

These popular mysteries feature Deborah Knott, a District Court Judge in fictional Colleton County, N.C., which is located "a few miles southeast of Raleigh." In each novel Judge Knott is forced to step out from behind the bench to pursue a local mystery on her own. The setting is especially important in these books. Colleton County still has working tobacco farms, and yet is bordered by the sprawling, increasingly urban Research Triangle. Deborah Knott, her large family, and the residents of the county are often caught in the clash between North Carolina's high-tech future and its traditional, agrarian past.

Eric Martin. *Luck*. New York: Norton, 2000.

Mike Olive and several classmates from Duke spend the summer in fictional Cottesville, N.C. alongside Mexican migrant workers on a tobacco farm. The students are working on a project to document the living and working conditions of the workers, and find that conditions are even worse than they imagined. As they began to protest the abuses they see, the locals are none too happy, especially Harvey Dickerson, Mike's childhood friend. To make things even more complicated, Mike has fallen for the daughter of one

of the Mexican workers. As the end of the summer approaches, Mike finds that there are now several people out to get him.

Jill McCorkle. *Carolina Moon*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1996.

Set in fictional Fulton, N.C. (a town "halfway between the river and the ocean"), this novel is populated by eccentric characters including a controversial local disk jockey and the memorable Quee Purdy, proprietress of a center to help people stop smoking. The novel is told from several perspectives and contains overlapping plots of romance and murder.

Jill McCorkle. *July 7*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin, 1984.

On July 7, in the fictional eastern North Carolina town of Marshboro, multiple generations gather to celebrate the 83rd birthday of Granner Weeks. In another part of town, the proprietor of the Quik Pik is found murdered in his store. Meanwhile, young writer Sam Swet, disillusioned but desperate for experience, has just arrived in town. This novel, set in a single day, features a wide and diverse cast of characters whose stories often overlap and result in a compelling portrait of a contemporary Southern town.

Sharyn McCrumb. *Ghost Rider*. New York: Dutton, 2003.

Set primarily in the North Carolina mountains, *Ghost Riders* tells three distinct stories. The interwoven tales involve Rattler, a current-day recluse and eccentric who socializes with Civil War re-enactors; Zebulon Vance, the Governor of North Carolina during the Civil War; and Malinda and Keith Blaylock, a married couple who join the Confederate army under Vance. Mixing past and present, McCrumb examines the Civil War and its legacy in the mountains of North Carolina.

Sharyn McCrumb. *The Songcatcher*. New York: Dutton, 2001.

In presenting the story of a simple English ballad, McCrumb traces the history of an American family. Lark McCoury, a popular country singer in Tennessee, is searching for a traditional song to record for her new album. The ballad, "The Rowan Stave," came to the country with her ancestor Malcolm McCoury, an 18th-century Scottish immigrant who fought in the Revolutionary War and then settled in the North Carolina mountains. The story of Lark's search for the origins of the ballad is interwoven with scenes from the past, as the song passes from one generation to the next before finally reaching her.

Sharyn McCrumb. *St. Dale*. New York: Kensington, 2005.

This funny, touching novel is a modern-day retelling of the *Canterbury Tales*, following a group of unlikely friends on the Dale Earnhardt Memorial Pilgrimage. The "Number Three Pilgrims" travel to several of the sites of prominent victories of the late NASCAR legend and North Carolina native. In the course of their journey they visit Piedmont North Carolina, "the land of textile mills and furniture factories, of tobacco fields and hog farms -- and race tracks." At stops at the Richard Petty museum in Randolph County, the North Carolina Motor Speedway in Rockingham, and the Lowe's Motor Speedway in Concord, the pilgrims find solace and inspiration in the life and legacy of Earnhardt.

Tim McLaurin. *Another Son of Man*. Asheboro, N.C.: Down Home Press, 2004.

When Nate dies of cancer in Chapel Hill, a small group of his friends carry out his final wish by bringing his ashes to his favorite spot on the North Carolina coast. They run into trouble when they travel unawares into a coming hurricane. The travelers are saved by a mysterious man known only as "Son." The novel combines action, as the would-be pilgrims battle the elements; mystery, as they try to understand the enigmatic Son; and tragedy, as they remember the final days of their friend. *Another Son of Man* was published posthumously, two years after McLaurin's death in 2002.

Joan A. Medlicott. *The Covington Novels*.

The Ladies of Covington Send Their Love. New York: St. Martins Press, 2000.

The Gardens of Covington. New York: St. Martins Press, 2001.

From the Heart of Covington. New York: St. Martins Press, 2002.

The Spirit of Covington. New York: Atria, 2003.

At Home in Covington. New York: Atria, 2004.

Grace Singleton, Hannah Parrish, and Amelia Declose, described as women "of a certain age," were finding life a little listless in the Pennsylvania boardinghouse where they lived. When one of them inherited a run-down farmhouse in Covington, N.C., the three women jumped at the chance for change and adventure. In each of the novels the women explore the lively town of Covington while they battle illness, welcome their children and other visitors, and meet the challenges of caring for a rambling old house. Covington is a fictional town in the North Carolina mountains, not far from Mars Hill.

Robert Morgan. *Gap Creek*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin, 2000.

Gap Creek follows a newlywed couple in Appalachian North and South Carolina in the early 1900s. Julie Harmon Richards, an independent hard-working woman, narrates the story of the difficulties she and her husband face just trying to get by. Battling fierce weather, personal tragedies, and thieves, this novel details the difficulties of mountain life. Morgan gives careful attention to the details of farm work, with a particularly memorable description of the butchering of a hog. *Gap Creek* was a selection of the Oprah Book Club in January 2000.

Robert Morgan. *This Rock*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002.

Set in the North Carolina mountains in the 1920s, *This Rock* continues to explore the themes and setting used by Morgan in his popular 2000 novel *Gap Creek*. The story follows the young brothers Muir and Moody Powell. Muir is earnestly committed to becoming a preacher, but finds his attempts at spreading the word frustrated by his older brother, who is much more interesting in running moonshine and gambling. As Muir struggles to understand his faith, the boys' mother fights to keep the family together in the still raw wilderness in which they live.

B.J. Mountford. *Bloodlines of Shackleford Banks*. Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 2004.

Wild ponies have run wild for centuries on the Outer Banks island of Shackleford Banks. But modern development and diseases have taken their toll, and each year volunteers gather to roundup the ponies for a checkup. This year, however, things don't go quite as usual. One of the horses is missing, and there are signs of foul play. The stakes quickly escalate when one of the volunteers is murdered. Park Service worker Roberta "Bert" Lenehan pursues the case, in the course of which she encounters greedy developers and environmental activists, and studies the long lineage of the horses.

B.J. Mountford. *Sea-Born Women*. Winston-Salem, N.C.: John F. Blair, 2002.

Wanting to start her life anew in a quiet, out-of-the-way place, Roberta ("Bert") Lenehan takes a job in the coastal town of Portsmouth, N.C. But peace and quiet never come as she is disturbed by mysterious noises in the night. When Bert becomes romantically involved with a younger man, she learns from him about the legend of the "Sea-Born Woman," whose ghost is supposed to aid sailors but, as many are beginning to fear, may be involved in recent unsolved murders.

Bill Morris. *Saltwater Cowboys*. Wilmington: Coastal Carolina Press, 2004.

The residents of a small maritime community in Down East Carteret County are surprised when sea turtles began showing up in places as odd as a hotel jacuzzi and the mayor's truck. Dodge Lawson, who operates a sort of marine salvage service when he's not fishing, has the job of hauling the turtles back out to sea. Dodge becomes embroiled in the turtle mystery, which seems to be the work of environmental activists.

Much of this funny novel is given to the story of the honest and genuine Down Easters who are simply trying to save their community from an onslaught of aggressive developers and inconsiderate recreational fishermen, while being harassed by a documentary filmmaker who pokes his nose into everything, and the never-ending parade of university researchers studying the local dialect.

Katy Munger. *The Casey Jones Novels*.

Legwork. New York: Avon, 1997.

Out of Time. New York: Avon, 1998.

Money to Burn. New York: Avon, 1999.

Bad to the Bone. New York: Avon, 2000.

Better off Dead. New York: Avon, 2001.

Casey Jones is a sassy, irreverent Durham-based detective. Due to a previous record she can't get a private investigator's license, so Jones operates with forged credentials, careful to keep just ahead of the law. All of the novels are set in North Carolina's Research Triangle (Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill), and Jones frequents many familiar places in Durham. In her description of the series, Munger promises that the novels all feature elements of classic hardboiled detective stories: "cussing, chasing, rescues, gun fights, drinking and sex."

Laurence Naumoff. *Silk Hope, N.C.* New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994.

The old farmhouse outside of the small Piedmont community of Silk Hope has passed down through generations from mother to daughter. The original occupants stipulated that only women could inherit the house. The current owners, Frannie and Natalie Vaughan, have just inherited the house and are faced with a tough decision. The sisters couldn't be more different -- Frannie is a rebel, the wild one in the family, while practical Natalie comes up with the idea to sell the house and land. As they struggle to decide what to do with the house, the sisters have to consider their own roles in the family's history, and determine whether or not, in the modern South, women still need a sanctuary all their own.

Lawrence Naumoff. *A Southern Tragedy, in Crimson and Yellow*. Winston-Salem: Zuckerman Cannon, 2005.

In this work of "docufiction," Naumoff explores the tragic 1991 fire at a chicken plant in Hamlet, N.C. in which many workers died when they were locked into the building, unable to escape from the flames. Naumoff engages many of the broader themes of the tragedy, looking at the struggles of the small town in a changing economy, and examining the complicated relationships between the employers and employees.

Barbara Neely. *Blanche Passes Go*. New York: Viking, 2000.

Blanche White is on her way back to her hometown, the fictional Farleigh, N.C., located near Durham. Blanche is going to spend the summer working for a friend's catering company, and is sure to be busy with the months-long celebration of Farleigh's bicentennial. But coming home is not easy. Blanche is confronted by painful memories from her past, and, finding that her detective skills have preceded her, she's hired to investigate a prominent local family. Viewing her hometown as an African American with a strong feminist perspective, Blanche provides a refreshingly different look at the New South.

Scott Nicholson. *The Red Church*. New York: Kensington, 2002.

The old red church in Whispering Pines, N.C., a fictional town in the Appalachian mountains, has stood empty for twenty years, said to be haunted by the ghost of the preacher who was hung from its rafters by his own angry congregation. Now that the church has been purchased by a minister whose fiery fundamentalism echoes that of his long-ago predecessor, strange things are starting to happen in town. The story is told through the eyes of thirteen-year-old Ronnie Day, who finds life complicated enough without a haunted church, and Sheriff Frank Littlefield, who must figure out what people or forces are terrorizing his town.

Michael Parker. *Hello Down There*. New York: Scribners, 1993.

Edwin Keene has become something of a recluse after a tragic car accident in which one of the passengers was killed. The aristocratic Keene, son of a prominent local family, eases the pain of his own injuries with too-frequent doses of morphine. As his life appears to be slipping away, there is a sudden hope for redemption when Keene falls for Eureka Spaight, a local high-school girl whose working-class family is very different from his own. The novel is set in the early 1950s in the fictional eastern North Carolina town of Trent.

Michael Parker. *Virginia Lovers*. Harrison, N.Y.: Delphinium, 2004.

The rural community of Trent, N.C., a fictional town between Fayetteville and Wilmington, is shaken when a local gay teenager is found murdered after a high school party. Thomas Edgecombe, owner of the town's weekly newspaper, begins to report on the case and is horrified to learn that his two sons may be suspects. The Edgecombe boys do not help their case when they disappear, running away to Washington, D.C. The novel follows the three Edgecombes as they struggle to understand the crime, its consequences, and each other.

Michael Parker. *If You Want Me to Stay*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2005.

With his mother gone, having abandoned the family, and his father ravaged by mental illness, fourteen-year-old Joel Junior is forced into adulthood. When their father becomes violent, Joel takes his two younger brothers and leaves in search of some way to save the family. The novel takes place in the 1970s in and around Trent, the same fictional eastern North Carolina town in which two of Parker's previous novels were set. Joel narrates the story in a vivid first person, his worries interspersed with the music of the day running through his head.

David Payne. *Early from the Dance*. New York: Doubleday, 2003.

Adam Jenrette, a successful artist in New York, has just suffered a breakdown and returned home to Killdeer, N.C., a fictional town on the Outer Banks. Things there don't exactly get any easier. Adam runs into Jane McRae, with whom he had spent a memorable summer when they were both eighteen. Adam and Jane find that they are still emotional about the suicide of a common friend from Killdeer. Together they reminisce about that long-ago summer and reflect on how choices they made then have echoed throughout their lives.

David Payne. *Gravesend Light*. New York: Doubleday, 2000.

Joe Madden is a professor at Duke who has come to the Outer Banks to study the inhabitants of a small fishing village. Joe moves into his family's home on the fictional island of Little Roanoke, and soon after begins an affair with Day Shaughnessy, a doctor at the local hospital. The narrative alternates between Joe's voice and Day's, describing the evolution of their relationship, and Joe's research. The citizens of Little Roanoke play a prominent role in the novel as Joe tries to understand the unique way of life on the Outer Banks.

T.R. Pearson. *A Short History of a Small Place*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985.

The suicide of Miss Myra Angelique Pettigrew – an aristocratic woman who had lived alone for years with her pet monkey, Mr. Britches – is the story that begins this novel, but is by no means the only one told. Narrated by young Louis Benfield in a rambling, funny voice that has been compared to the narrative style of William Faulkner, this novel portrays the people of Neely, N.C., a fictional Piedmont town that may be based on Reidsville.

T. R. Pearson. *Glad News of the Natural World*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005.

Pearson's widely-acclaimed first novel, *A Short History of a Small Place*, was the story of young Louis Benfield of Neely, N.C. Now, twenty years later, Pearson returns to Neely and picks up the story of 34-year-old Louis. Tired of his listless life at home and his dead-end job, Louis moves to New York city, but things don't get a whole lot better. He bounces from one odd job to another and makes several desperate stabs at romance that are only doomed to fail. It is only when tragedy strikes his family that Louis is forced to make responsible decisions and, in a way, finally grows up.

Michael Phillips. *The Shenandoah Sisters*.

Angels Watching Over Me. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2003.

A Day to Pick Your Own Cotton. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2003.

The Color of Your Skin Ain't the Color of Your Heart. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2004.

Together Is All We Need. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2004.

Two young women from very different backgrounds must rely on each other in order to survive in the turbulent times following the Civil War in fictional Shenandoah County, N.C. Mayme Jukes is a former slave whose family members were killed by Confederate soldiers. Katie Clairborne is the last person left on the once majestic Rosewood plantation. In these novels, the girls usually face danger and emerge with a deeper understanding of race, friendship, and their Christian faith.

Charles Price. *The Cock's Spur*. Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 2002.

In the mountains of western North Carolina in the 1880s, moonshining and cockfighting are a regular part of the rough-and-tumble life. Webb Darling, the self-proclaimed king of the moonshiners, rules the region from his hilltop cabin. In contrast to the cruel and conniving Darling is a former slave named Hamby McFee who dreams of making enough money to escape from his life in the mountains, where he still farms the same land he worked as a slave. Unfortunately, the only chance Hamby has at making enough money to leave may be to win it from Darling.

Charles Price. *Freedom's Altar*. Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1999.

Set in the violent, lawless days just after the Civil War, this novel explores the deeply complicated questions about how the South would recover and adjust to new ideas about race and class. Daniel McFee, a former slave who had fought for the Union, has returned home to western North Carolina to become a sharecropper on land owned by his old master, Madison Curtis. Despite good intentions, both Curtis and McFee have trouble adjusting to this new relationship. It's especially hard to make any meaningful progress when the whole region is overrun with violent vigilantes all too willing to take matters into their own hands. The novel is based in part on the author's family history. *Freedom's Altar* won the 1999 Sir Walter Raleigh Award for the best novel by a North Carolinian.

Reynolds Price. *A Long and Happy Life*. New York: Atheneum, 1962.

Price's widely acclaimed first novel is the story of Rosacoke Mustian and her unshakable adoration for the rakish Wesley Beavers. Rosacoke's patient and unselfish love appears wasted on Wesley, a motorcycle-riding skirt-chasing Navy veteran who simply seems too impatient to settle down. The setting in rural eastern North Carolina is carefully and lyrically described.

Reynolds Price. *The Good Priest's Son*. New York: Scribner, 2005.

On September 11, 2001, Mabry Kincaid is flying home from a relaxing vacation in Italy when the terrorist attacks hit. Unable to return to his apartment in New York, he travels instead to his father's house in the fictional town of Wells in eastern North Carolina. In the time he spends back at home, Mabry tries to reconcile his relationship with his ailing father and come to terms with his own past in North Carolina, which he thought he had escaped by moving to New York. In the midst of personal crises, and set against

the chaos and tragedy in New York, there is also the compelling mystery of a painting which Mabry, an art dealer, has recently acquired and suspects to be a Van Gogh.

Kathy Reichs. *The Temperance Brennan Novels*.

Deja Dead. New York: Scribner, 1997.

Death du Jour. New York: Scribner, 1999.

Deadly Decisions. New York: Scribner, 2000.

Fatal Voyage. New York: Scribner, 2001.

Grave Secrets. New York: Scribner, 2002.

Bare Bones. New York: Scribner, 2003.

Monday Mourning. New York: Scribner, 2004.

Dr. Temperance Brennan is a forensic anthropologist who divides her time between Charlotte, N.C. and Quebec. In each of these novels her job calls her to the scene of a mysterious murder and she has to rely on both her technical expertise and old-fashioned detective work to unravel the usually complicated story behind the crime. Reichs writes with authority – she is a professor of anthropology at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and appears regularly as an expert witness in criminal trials. Most of these novels include scenes set in Charlotte, which Dr. Brennan describes as “a poster child for multiple personality disorder, the Sybil of cities.”

J.D. Rhoades. *The Devil's Right Hand*. New York: St. Martin's, 2005.

Jack Keller is a bail bondsman and a veteran of the first Gulf War. Still scarred by memories of battle, his life doesn't get any easier when he's caught in the middle of a violent struggle in Fayetteville. Jack is on the trail of an elusive bail-jumper who has just murdered a local Lumbee man whose vengeful sons compete with Jack to see who can catch the fleeing killer first. To make things even more complicated, the Fayetteville police department seems to have it in for Jack, so that while he pursues his quarry he's forced to stay one step ahead of the law.

Jack Riggs. *When the Finch Rises*. New York: Ballantine, 2003.

The narrator of this novel, twelve-year-old Raybert Williams Jr., lives in Ellenton, a fictional North Carolina mill town in 1968. Raybert's mother and father, each with deep problems of their own, teeter between responsible parenting and neglect, while Raybert's best friend Palmer faces an even tougher lot with an abusive stepfather and a potential sexual predator in the family. Raybert and Palmer find comfort in each other's company, and in their shared fantasies of growing up and escaping Ellenton.

Karen Robards. *Beachcomber*. New York, Atria Books, 2003.

Christy Petrino sought a simple vacation at Ocracoke Island after breaking up with her mobster boyfriend. But when somebody makes an attempt on her life, she must figure out whether the New Jersey mob or an Outer Banks serial killer (nicknamed "The Beachcomber") is out to get her. This romantic suspense novel teams Christy with FBI agent Luke Rand. Those familiar with Ocracoke may raise an eyebrow at Robards's description of "cliffs on the island, tall rocky cliffs leaning out over the ocean"

Karen Rose. *Have You Seen Her?* New York: Warner Books, 2004.

Special Agent Steven Thatcher is on the trail of a serial killer who is targeting cheerleaders in the fictional Raleigh suburb of Pineville. In between chasing criminals, Thatcher, a widower, finds time to care for his three sons. Worried about his eldest son, he meets with the boy's teacher, Jenna Marshall, and the sparks fly. Their romantic involvement becomes especially complicated when it turns out that the killer may be eyeing Jenna as his next victim.

Ann B. Ross. *The Miss Julia Novels*.

Miss Julia Speaks Her Mind. New York: William Morrow, 1999.

Miss Julia Takes Over. New York: Viking, 2001.

Miss Julia Throws a Wedding. New York: Viking, 2002.

Miss Julia Hits the Road. New York: Viking, 2003.

Miss Julia Meets Her Match. New York: Viking, 2004.

Miss Julia's School of Beauty. New York: Viking, 2005.

"Miss Julia" is Mrs. Wesley Lloyd Springer of Abbotsville, N.C., a fictional small town probably based on Hendersonville. Miss Julia is a proper Southern lady with a fierce independent streak who does not hesitate to speak her mind. Each book finds Miss Julia embroiled in some new scandal or adventure and reveals, in the interactions between her and the colorful residents of the town, the warm-hearted kindness underneath Miss Julia's feisty exterior.

David Schulman. *The Past is Never Dead: A Gritz Goldberg Mystery*. Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 2004.

Gritz Goldberg is a psychiatrist in his hometown of Asheville, N.C., and is working in the same mental hospital where he once spent time as a child. Gritz becomes involved in a decades-old murder case when a local man with a heavy conscience confesses to him that the wrong man was convicted for the 1939 killing of a young woman at the Battery Park Hotel. As Gritz delves into Asheville's past, he uncovers interesting - and sometimes disturbing -- facts about some of the city's prominent citizens. Many of Schulman's characters are based on actual historical figures, including the colorful U.S. Senator Robert Rice Reynolds and the prominent anti-semitic William Dudley Pelley. In the course of chasing the down the facts of the case, Gritz learns a great deal about Asheville's Jewish community in the 1930s.

Sarah Shaber. *The Simon Shaw Mysteries*.

Simon Said. New York: St. Martin's, 1997.

Snipe Hunt. New York: St. Martin's, 2000.

The Fugitive King. New York: St. Martin's, 2002.

The Bug Funeral. New York: St. Martin's, 2004.

Simon Shaw is a professor of history at historic (but fictional) Kenan College in downtown Raleigh. Dr. Shaw's specialty is historical anthropology, and this leads to his being called into action in each novel to investigate a long-unsolved crime. Although Simon lives and works in contemporary Raleigh, his adventures often take him to other parts of the state. In *Snipe Hunt* Simon digs into North Carolina's maritime history while on vacation at the Outer Banks, while in *The Fugitive King* he looks into a crime in his hometown of Boone.

Steven Sherrill. *Visits from the Drowned Girl*. New York: Random House, 2004.

Despite the impressive panoramic view from the radio towers atop which Benny Poteat works, he doesn't usually see much. But one day, as he watches silently, too far away to help, he sees a young woman walk into a river and calmly drown herself. Instead of reporting the suicide to the police, Benny examines the materials left at the scene, learns the identity of the girl, locates her family, and becomes romantically involved with her sister. The story is set in the fictional Piedmont town of Buffalo Shoals, which is populated by strangely intriguing and uniquely Southern residents.

Louise Shivers. *Here to Get My Baby Out of Jail*. Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 2003.

Roxy Walston is a young wife and mother on a Tarborough, N.C. tobacco farm in 1937. Farmlife is simple and tough, and Roxy feels restless, especially when Jack Ruffin is hired to help with the harvest. Roxy feels an instant attraction to Jack and is soon faced with choices that could change her forever. When *Here to Get*

My Baby Out of Jail was first published in 1983, it was praised for its tender evocation of life on a tobacco farm and was named the best first novel of the year by "USA Today."

Bland Simpson. *The Mystery of Beautiful Nell Cropsey*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993.

As far as anyone knew, the last person to see Nell Cropsey alive was her boyfriend Jim Wilcox, who left her crying on her front porch in November 1901 after he ended their relationship. The people of Elizabeth City, N.C. looked desperately for the young woman, relying on bloodhounds and even psychics in a search that brought national attention to the small town. Nell's body was finally found floating in the Pasquotank River, a few weeks after she disappeared. Jim Wilcox was accused of the murder, even though the evidence against him was only circumstantial and he hotly proclaimed his innocence. In this "nonfiction novel," Simpson dramatizes the true story of Nell Cropsey with the touch of a novelist, relying on first-person narrators and period details to give an intimate look at small-town eastern North Carolina at the dawn of the twentieth century.

Judy Reene Singer. *Horseplay*. New York: Broadway Books, 2004.

Fed up with her life, Judy van Brunt quits her teaching job, leaves her philandering husband, and finds work at a North Carolina horse farm. Her instincts were correct: she finds happiness much easier to come by in the simple world of the horses. Singer writes with knowledge and humor about the equestrian world as she portrays Judy's efforts at riding and managing thoroughbreds. Judy has some success with the horses, but their complicated and colorful owners prove more difficult to handle.

Mark Slouka. *God's Fool*. New York: Knopf, 2002.

Chang and Eng Bunker, the famous nineteenth-century conjoined twins from Siam (hence the term "Siamese twins") are the subject of this novel. The brothers' colorful life story is told from the viewpoint of Chang, following them all over the world, from Siam to Paris to stints in P.T. Barnum's sideshows before they settle down to a quiet life in rural North Carolina. Slouka pays close attention to historical detail and portrays the brothers not as mere curiosities but as human beings, writing near the end of the novel about the close relationship between Chang and one of his sons.

Lee Smith. *Saving Grace*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995.

Florida Grace Shepherd had a rough childhood. Raised by a father who was a snake-handling preacher and abused by her half-brother, she managed to escape by marrying at seventeen. Set in the fictional mountain town Scrabble Creek, N.C., the novel is enlivened by the many kind and colorful characters in Grace's life. The story follows her through to adulthood and traces her struggles in her relationships with her husband and children, and difficulty in coming to terms with her own religious faith.

Nicholas Sparks. *The Guardian*. New York: Warner Books, 2004.

Julie Berenson is only twenty-five when her husband dies of a brain tumor and she struggles to decide how to go on with her life. As the novel progresses, Julie begins to date again, but one of the men she encounters becomes too possessive too quickly and when somebody begins stalking her, she fears that it's him. The "guardian" is a Great Dane puppy, a posthumous gift from her late husband. The novel is set in the coastal town of Swansboro.

Nicholas Sparks. *True Believer*. New York: Warner, 2005.

When it looks like ghosts are haunting a cemetery in Boone Creek, N.C., science writer Jeremy Marsh comes to town to investigate. Marsh expected to find a plausible explanation for the ghostly visions, but did not plan on falling for a local librarian, who also happens to be the granddaughter of the town psychic. Marsh finds himself questioning his own beliefs and must figure out how much he will let the budding romance affect his life and career.

June Spence. *Change Baby*. New York: Riverhead, 2004

When Avie Goss returns to her hometown, the fictional Regina, N.C., to care for her elderly mother, she finds more than she had expected. The simple family relationships that she had known growing up turn out to be much more complicated than she had thought. The story is told from the alternating viewpoints of Avie, her mother Zephra, and Zephra's close friend Mabry. As Avie untangles family mysteries, changes loom in her own life when she begins dating a local minister.

Judith Minhorn Stacy. *Betty Sweet Tells All*. New York: HarperCollins, 2002.

Four generations of Sweet women are held together by the unflappable Betty Sweet of Poplar Grove, N.C. Her daughter Maggie causes a stir by running away from her husband and family, while Betty's mother, Mama Dean, continues to wreak havoc in the house. In the course of dealing with her wacky family, Betty's own life takes a significant turn when she begins spending time with Poplar Grove newcomer Charlie Love, who has charmed Betty with his English accent.

Judith Minhorn Stacy. *Maggie Sweet*. New York: HarperCollins, 2004.

When Maggie Sweet discovers that her husband has spent the family vacation money on a pair of cemetery plots, she's not happy. With her twin daughters nearly grown and her husband pretty much on auto-pilot, Maggie reflects upon a life lived largely for others and decides that it's time to do something on her own. When an old high-school boyfriend shows up in town, Maggie finds the old flames renewed, especially as he encourages her to pursue her dream to work as a cosmetician at the local Curl & Swirl. The novel is set in the fictional western North Carolina town of Poplar Grove, possibly based on the author's hometown of Mooresville.

William R. Trotter. *The Sands of Pride* (New York: Avalon, 2002) and *The Fires of Pride* (New York: Carrol & Graf, 2003).

In these two novels, Trotter dramatizes many of the important events and individuals in coastal North Carolina during the Civil War. *The Sands of Pride* is set in Wilmington during 1861 to 1863 when the port city was the center of Confederate blockade-running efforts. *The Fires of Pride* of pride continues the story through the end of the war, with a long section on the Union assault on Fort Fisher. Trotter is able to trace several narratives throughout the chaos of battle, with many of his characters based on actual people. Trotter is the author of a multi-volume history of the Civil War in North Carolina, and can be counted in these novels to provide accurate depictions of events, and careful attention to historic detail.

Sharon Wildwing. *Some Welcome Home*. Gale, 2005.

Elizabeth Pepperhawk has just come back from Vietnam to serve at the army hospital at Fort Bragg. She had barely arrived when she comes across the dead body of a soldier who was supposed to have died overseas two years before. When the Military Police are hesitant to pursue the case through to the end, Pepperhawk enlists the help of officer Avivah Rosen and the two women track the clues on their own. The story is told from the alternating perspectives of Pepperhawk and Rosen and is a rich glimpse into life on a military base in the early 1970s.

Martha Witt. *Broken as Things Are*. New York: Henry Holt, 2004.

Fourteen-year-old Morgan-Lee divides her summer between spending time with her autistic and occasionally abusive older brother and developing a crush on a childhood friend. Morgan-Lee's parents, aunt, and younger sister are too caught up in their own lives to pay much attention, leaving the young narrator to take the first steps into adulthood on her own. The story is set in a piedmont North Carolina town similar to the author's hometown of Hillsborough.

Thomas Wolfe. *O Lost*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2000.

O Lost is the original, unedited version of the *Look Homeward, Angel*, Thomas Wolfe's classic novel about a sensitive young man growing up in pre-Depression Altamont, a fictional version of the author's hometown of Asheville. Wolfe's manuscript was cut and reshaped by the author with the help of legendary editor Maxwell Perkins. Now readers can see the raw material for themselves, including a long introductory section on protagonist Eugene Gant's ancestors in the Civil War.

Lynn York. *The Piano Teacher*. New York: Plume, 2004.

Miss Wilma, the longtime piano teacher in the fictional small town of Swan's Knob, N.C. (based on the author's hometown of Pilot Mountain), lives a life of quiet routine until her rebellious daughter Sarah shows up on her doorstep. It turns out the excitement is only beginning, as Sarah is followed by her ex-husband and her current boyfriend. When a local police officer is murdered, the attention of the town turns quickly toward the new arrivals. The story is told from several points of view, including those of Miss Wilma and of Roy Swann, an aging, affable bachelor who has had his eye on the prickly piano teacher for years.

Isabel Zuber. *Salt*. New York: Picador, 2002.

Set in the fictional mountain town of Faith, N.C. at the turn of the century, *Salt* is the story of Anna Stockton, an independent young woman who dreams of a better life away from home, and her unlikely husband, John Bayley, an older man consumed by status and greed. Zuber pays close attention to historical detail, providing a careful description of domestic life in the North Carolina mountains in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There is a town named Faith in Rowan County, however, the setting of Zuber's story clearly takes place much farther to the west.