

NC Authors

Margaret Maron

"Born and bred in North Carolina where the piedmont meets the Sandhills, I grew up on a modest two-mule tobacco farm that has been in the family for over a hundred years..... Working in tobacco is one of those life experiences I'm glad to have had. I'm even gladder that it's something I'll never have to do again"

*Deborah Knott series

Deborah Knott was expected to be a conventional little girl and eventually a conventional woman, worshipped on a pedestal by a conventional husband. Instead, she became an attorney, infiltrating the old boy network that still rules the tobacco country of Colleton County, North Carolina.

* Sigrid Harald Series

"The Sigrid Harald series grew out of a short story that used my experience as the art department secretary at Brooklyn College as the backdrop. Sigrid had almost no family, only a mother, a housemate, and a Southern grandmother. I gave Deborah a large sprawling family who would meddle in her affairs and try to boss her around."

Sigrid was a professional whose job is to solve murder cases. Deborah is a judge who thinks she's minding her own business but usually gets drawn in by circumstances or her own curiosity.

Charles Kuralt

In 1951, Kuralt entered the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he edited the student newspaper, *The Daily Tar Heel*. After his year as editor, he left the university without taking a degree and returned to Charlotte to become general assignment reporter for the *Charlotte News*. As an aspiring and inspired reporter, he landed a daily column, "Charles Kuralt's People," which he used to describe the lives of everyday citizens. His work earned him the Ernie Pyle prize, attracting national attention.

Charles Frazier

Cold Mountain was his first novel, published in 1997. It traces the journey of Inman, a wounded deserter from the Confederate army near the end of the Civil War. It follows his harrowing journey from deserting the army to finding his way back to Ada, the woman he left behind. The work is rich in the culture and sensibilities of the North Carolina mountains and is based on local history and stories handed down by Frazier's father about the Civil War Frazier's great-great-uncle William Pinkney Inman. *Thirteen Moons, Nightwood*

Thomas Wolfe

An American novelist of the early twentieth century. Wolfe wrote four lengthy novels, plus many short stories, dramatic works and novellas. He is known for mixing highly original, poetic, rhapsodic, and impressionistic prose with autobiographical writing. Look Homeward Angel. Bonfire of the Vanities, You Can't Go Home Again, Of Time and the River

“Ellen Foster” by Kaye Gibbons

Kaye Gibbons was born in Nash County, NC TO Charles and Alice Batt in 1960. She Graduated from Rocky Mt Sr. HS, Attended NC STATE University and UNC at Chapel Hill. Kaye was nine years old when her Mother committed suicide. She was raised by several relative as her Father was ill equipped to care for her due to his alcoholism. She later resided with her married brother who was 11 years older than Kaye.

She married Michael Gibbons in 1984 and they had 3 daughters.....chronic illness of her daughter Mary forced her to drop out of college. Kaye and Michael were divorced in 1990. She later married a Raleigh attorney and they were divorced in 2003.

Gibbons wrote ELLEN FOSTER during a manic state. She had been diagnosed with Bi-Polar disorder as was her Mother.

ELLEN FOSTER had a life very similar to Kaye Gibbons....the narrator of the book is Ellen. After the death of her Mother she is forced to become head of the household as her Father is an abusive alcoholic and she suffers physical, psychological and sexual abuse. She escapes to live with her friend Starletta and her parents, who are black, in a grungy shack without an indoor bathroom. A teacher notices she is bruised and intervenes and she is sent to live with the Art teacher Julia and her husband Ray...both are liberal hippies. Ellen is happy there but her Grandmother, a mean, cruel, miserly old woman, sues for custody and wins. Ellen was forced to work in the field with the black field hands. Her Grandmother always blamed Ellen for her mother's death and hated Ellen's father. When her father died and Ellen wept her Grandmother was furious and demanded she never cry again. When Ellen's Grandmother falls ill Ellen tends to her and upon death covers her with flowers so Goad will accept her. She then goes to live with cousins who mistreat Ellen. She ultimately comes to live with the Foster woman and reconnects with Starletta and realizes that her life was not as harsh as being a black woman in those times.

“The Ballad of Tom Dooley” by Sharyn McCrumb.

Born Sharyn Arwood in Wilmington, NC, in 1948, graduated from UNC Chapel Hill, then received a Master's Degree in English from Virginia Tech.

I Read “She Walks These Hills” and found the detail of the culture and the natural beauty of the Appalachian area of our state thought provoking as well as troubling But my favorite work of Sharyn McCrumb is The Ballad of Tom Dooley.

The real story is much better than the popular story as told by the Kingston Trio. Tom Dula was a soldier having an affair with an older, wealthy, married women named Ann Melton. Laura Foster was being courted by a Yankee school teacher. On Dula's return from the war in 1866 he and Laura fell in love and began an intimate relationship much to Ann Melton's chagrin as Laura was a cousin of hers. It was thought that in a fit of Jealousy she killed Laura. Around the same time, Tom Dula was diagnosed with venereal disease and he blamed Laura and she was going to pay for her indiscretion. Laura disappeared around May 25 and her body was found and identified by the dress she was wearing and the gap in between her two front teeth. A trial ensued in Wilkesboro NC on Oct.1, 1866 and Tom Dula and Ann Melton would be tried separately. Dula was represented by the former Governor, Zebulon Vance. There was a change of venue and the trial was moved to Statesville, NC. At the time, the NY Herald newspaper stated” A state of immorality unexemplified in the history of the country exists among these people, and such a general system of freeloivism prevails that it is a wise child that knows its Father.” 2 Trials were held but you will need to read the book to find out the results!

"Kate Vaiden" by EDWARD REYNOLDS PRICE

Reynolds Price was born in Macon, NC in 1933 and through the depression years lived in Macon, Henderson, Warrenton and Roxboro. He graduated from Broughton HS, and went on to Duke and then as a Rhodes scholar to Oxford University He returned to Duke in 1958 and remained there for the rest of his career teaching creative writing Milton and The Gospels.

I first hear him lecturer at the Mint Museum in Charlotte after he had been diagnosed with spinal cancer and had surgery. He walked haltingly across the stage assisted by the use of two canes. He was a handsome man with a mesmerizing voice and a wry sense of humor. I knew very little of his story or his writing. I read Kate Vaiden and I was hooked.

Kate Vaiden was a “Female Job”, one crisis/heartbreak after another....murder-suicide that left her an orphan and she was raised by a loving Aunt and Uncle. A series of missteps followed including the birth of a son. She was unable to raise him emotionally and so gave him to her Aunt and Uncle. At fifty seven she has cancer and begins to search for her son and review her life in her feisty way. But while she struggled she never quit on life. Price wrote as though he lived in the head and heart of Kate.....gauging the female response, emotion and mostly endurance..as well as humor. Perhaps that was due to the dramatic changes in his own life at the time.

Reynolds Price writings, whether they are fiction or bible based challenge you to examine and reassess your own critical thinking. He is the consummate Southern storyteller.

Later, I learned that he collaborated with James Taylor in writing the lyrics for “Copper Line”.