Celebrating *NCLR* Alumni – and Inviting You to the *NCLR* Family

by Margaret D. Bauer, Editor

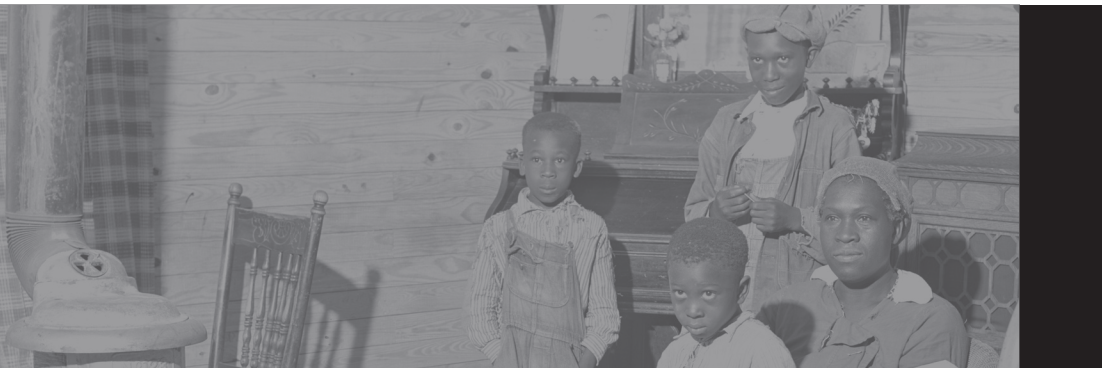
I love to hear about new books by writers who have published in *NCLR*'s pages. In this section, find reviews of books that include an essay (the 2023 John Ehle Prize essay by Melissa D. Birkhofer and Paul M. Worley), a short story (by Oswaldo Estrada), and a poem (by Hannah Bonner) first published in *NCLR*. Another review, of Jeremy Jones's latest nonfiction book, brings him back to our pages with new work, a fascinating volume of speculative nonfiction. And since it was *NCLR* alumnus Robin Hemley who explained that term to me some years ago, I asked him to review this book in which the author not only deciphers his ancestor's coded journals, but then reimagines the man's life for his readers. Let this introduction serve as an enthusiastic invitation to all of our "alumni" to submit your new book for review. I *will* recognize your name.

One of the literary events *NCLR* editors enjoyed in Spring 2026 was a gathering of the Paul Green and Rassie McLeod descendants in Harnett County. The Paul Green Foundation purchased a bench to memorialize the friendship between the writer and his childhood friend, an African American boy, son of sharecroppers on the Green land. This friendship, brought to an end far too soon due to Rassie's untimely death, profoundly influenced Green's life and writings. Foundation Executive Director Georgann Eubanks told about this friendship, and then we heard the prose poem by North Carolina Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green, memorializing the friendship in words for all of us, even if unable to visit the Harnett County Public Library where the bench has been placed. In this issue, you can also read Green's telling about his friend Rassie, which we share with the Foundation's permission.

And speaking of Jaki Shelton Green, read here about her latest honoring – by the North Carolina Writers Conference – and read a taste of her years serving writers of all ages. It is our hope that the stories she shared with the conference attendees, which you can read here, might inspire a biographer to reach out to her to hear more.

In 2022, *NCLR* featured writer-teachers. Adding another writer to those interviewed in that issue, is Nora Gaskin's interview with Nancy Peacock, in which we learn about the writer's passion for teaching and some of the lessons the writer passes on to her writing students.

Finally, since the 2006 feature on children's and YA literature, *NCLR* has been pleased to share reviews of books our readers might seek for the young readers in their lives. One of these books is a picture book biography of Wilma Dykeman, which reminds me to repeat what I wrote in my introduction to the Flashbacks section of the 2026 print issue, which included Terry Roberts's essay on several Appalachian writers, including Dykeman: *NCLR* would welcome an essay on Dykeman. And I ask: are there any previously unpublished interviews with her out there?

This invitation prompts me to share with you an opportunity offered by the North Caroliniana Society (to whom we are grateful for grant funding): the Archie K. Davis Fellowships, which, "on a competitive basis," provide funding "to assist scholars in gaining access to resources contributing to knowledge of the state's past."

Lastly, I share here the news of James W. Clark's latest honor: the 2026 North Caroliniana Society Award. A short news story cannot do that evening justice, so I invite you to the Society's website, to read about Jim, his inspiring acceptance remarks (about writing, as well as the remarks from the panelists who shared how their amazing programs "protect, preserve, and tell the story of North Carolina." You can also watch the panel on YouTube. ■