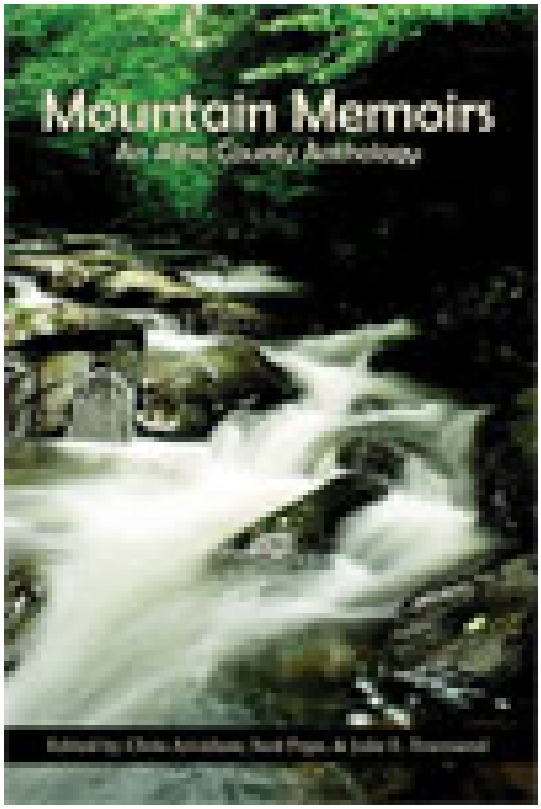
Mountain Memoirs
An Ashe County Anthology

Mountain Memoirs: An Ashe County Anthology edited by Chris Arvidson, Scot Pope, and Julie E. Townsend

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Memoir
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You can still get lost in Ashe County, North Carolina, and GPS won't help. Once called The Lost Province, it's a place of gravel roads, gorgeous mountains, and the first tricklings of the New River. And, here there are writers. In *Mountain Memoirs: An Ashe County Anthology*, twenty of them craft works about their relationships with this frequently beautiful and sometimes

mysterious corner of the North Carolina high country. They write about its mysteries, its beauty, and the people who are sometimes lost and sometimes found in the landscapes.

Something about this particular little place—amongst the peaks and on the riverbanks—inspires writers. They live here and visit and hideout and work. Some are well known, like Lee Smith, Clyde Edgerton, and D.G. Martin. Some are known only locally. Like the very small towns that sparsely dot the area, the writers in this anthology are sprinkled in the hollows and along the river, writing stories, poems, and essays about how this very specific place has shaped, changed, and informed their lives and the lives of those around them.

Lee Smith invents a young academic from another century who is studying the flora; Clyde Edgerton crafts poetry evocative of the sense of his corner of the county. From editor Scot Pope, a concentration of the "Essence" of the place is offered; others like D.G. Martin and editor Julie Townsend, profile people whose characters shape their attachments to this place. Each of the twenty writers brings their words to evoke the sense, and sometimes nonsense, of this small corner of big mountains and the old New River.
—Chris Arvidson, Scot Pope, and Julie E. Townsend

Contributors include North Carolina Writers' Network members Rebecca Gummere, D.G. Martin, Janet C. Pittard, Diana Renfro, and Lee Smith.

Chris Arvidson lives in "downtown" West Jefferson in Ashe County with her husband Henry. She has worked for non-profit conservation organizations, Habitat for Humanity, and in higher education as a teacher and professional staff. Currently she works for the National Committee for the New River. A couple of years ago she founded the writers' salon "Wordkeepers" with Scot Pope and Julie Townsend. She is a member of the organizing committee for the On the Same Page Literary Festival and serves as Chairman of the Ashe County Board of Elections. She earned an MFA in Creative Nonfiction from Goucher College and has published her writing in magazines, literary publications, and newspapers.

In 1992, Scot Pope "escaped" the rat race in Charlotte, NC, to live a simple, humble life in the Creston community of northwest Ashe County. Before leaving Charlotte, he studied Creative Writing at Central Piedmont Community College under the tutelage of Barbara Lawing. After his arrival in Ashe County, he joined the Blue Ridge Writers' Group and continued to write poetry and short stories. Scot has read his works at various venues in Ashe County including the Ashe County Arts Council's Coffeehouse as well as the annual Arts Council's Night of the Spoken

Word. Along with Chris Arvidson and Julie Townsend, he is a founding member of Wordkeepers. His poem "Walking Woods Alone" was published in the *Iodine Poetry Journal*. In addition to writing, Scot is also a professional photographer and musician.

Julie E. Townsend moved to Ashe County full-time in 2008, although it has been her stomping ground since the mid-1960's. She taught writing full-time at UNC-Charlotte for almost nineteen years, and currently she is an adjunct instructor at Appalachian State University. *Seafood Jesus* , her first novel, made its debut in 2011. Townsend has other publications such as short stories, a textbook, book reviews, and an award-winning expose that won first-place in the "N.C. Small Working Press."