

# NORTH CAROLINA READS

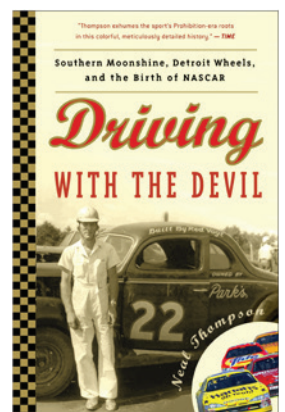
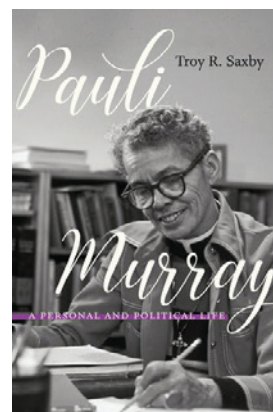
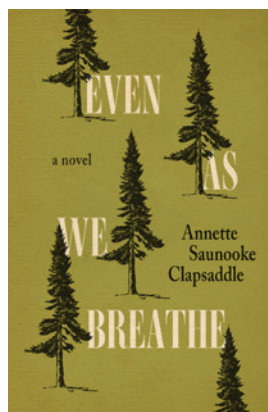
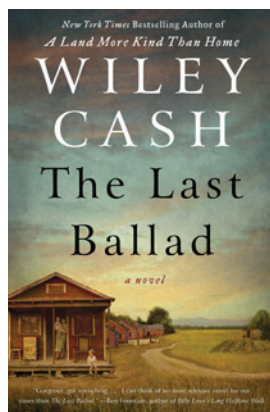
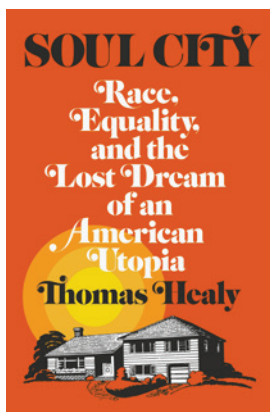
READING SCHEDULE &  
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

North Carolina Humanities' 2022 statewide book club, North Carolina Reads, features five books that explore issues of racial, social, and gender equality and the history and culture of North Carolina.

North Carolina Humanities hopes these stories encourage engaging, productive conversation among participants. At the heart of North Carolina Reads is North Carolina Humanities' desire to connect communities through shared reading experiences.

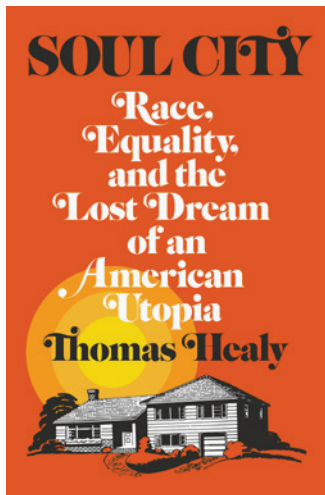
As part of North Carolina Reads, North Carolina Humanities is hosting monthly book club events where participants will hear from guest speakers, including book authors and topic experts, and have a chance to ask questions about the month's book.

Here, we offer a reading schedule and provide sample discussion questions to ask yourself and talk with others about as you read.





# FEBRUARY 2022



## *Soul City: Race, Equality, and the Lost Dream of an American Utopia*

BY THOMAS HEALY

### READING SCHEDULE

February 1-6 .....	pages 1-114
February 7-13 .....	pages 115-229
February 14-20 .....	pages 230-344

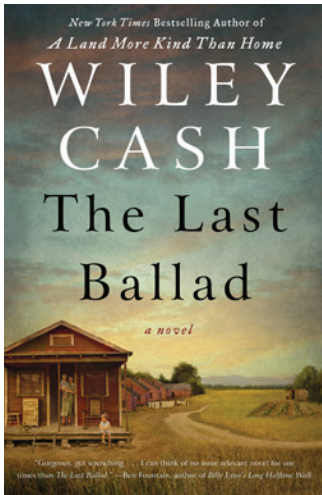
### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In what ways did Floyd McKissick’s early life experiences and his work during the Civil Rights Era shape his idea to create the utopian community of Soul City?
- What were the impacts of urbanization on people living in America’s biggest cities? In what ways did this influence McKissick’s choice of location for Soul City? If Soul City had not been built in a rural area, would it have experienced a different outcome?
- How did the planning of Soul City benefit the surrounding areas and nearby communities?
- How were industrialization (or lack thereof) and the building of Soul City connected?
- Of all the obstacles that Floyd McKissick and Soul City faced, which do you think was most responsible for the project’s defeat?
- What can we learn from Soul City regarding future development and economic impact in both urban and rural areas?





# MARCH 2022



## ***The Last Ballad***

BY WILEY CASH

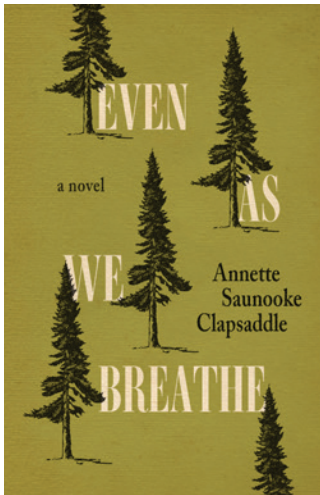
### **READING SCHEDULE**

March 1-6 .....	pages 1-87
March 7-13 .....	pages 88-200
March 14-20 .....	pages 201-300
March 21-27 .....	pages 301-370

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- What daily challenges did Ella May Wiggins face in struggling to provide for her family?
- Describe the working conditions of the mill. What recourse did workers have in defending themselves against unfair treatment?
- How did these conditions eventually lead to a workers' strike?
- How did the workers respond to Wiggins's songs at the rallies? How do music and history influence each other?
- Did the union leadership's political affiliations affect how the strike was viewed by the general public? (Note the reaction of the communities around Gastonia to the strikers as well as the reaction of lawmakers in Washington, D.C. when Ella May's group stops them on the street.)
- Even though the strike at Loray Mill was not successful, what impact did it have on the labor movement in the United States?
- Why do you think Cash decided to use the voices of Wiggins's daughter, the mill-owner's wife, a Pullman porter, and the old man who pulls the "dope wagon" to tell the story? What does each bring to the story that gives it a unique perspective?

# APRIL 2022



## ***Even As We Breathe***

BY ANNETTE SAUNOOKE CLAPSADDLE

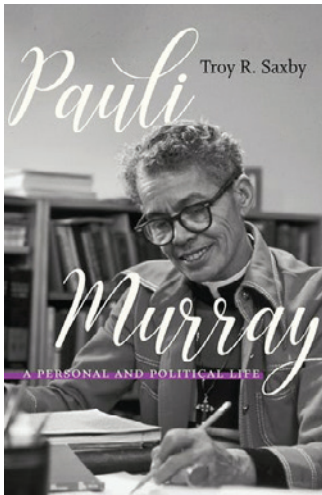
### **READING SCHEDULE**

April 4-10 .....	pages 1-76
April 11-17 .....	pages 77-160
April 18-24 .....	pages 161-230

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Near the beginning of the novel, Cowney Sequoyah says, “Bones can teach.” What is the significance of bones in the story? What lessons do the bones teach?
- Cowney says, “For once in their lives, those Japanese Americans must have wished they were just Japanese in America.” Considering the experiences of Japanese Americans and prisoners of war, in what ways did the war challenge democratic traditions?
- How do you think Cowney feels about Cherokee, NC, his heritage, and his personal history? Does this change over the course of the novel?
- What is the importance of both physical and metaphoric boundaries in the novel?
- How does the novel explore the intersection of class and race for the Eastern Band of the Cherokee, residents of Asheville, and upper-class foreign diplomats in the story?
- In both world wars, Native Americans, African Americans, and Latinos joined the U.S. Army to fight. In what ways were they fighting for democracy on and off the battlefield?
- At the end of the book, Cowney and Lee go to town to see the Charlie Chaplin film *The Great Dictator*. Why does the film appeal to Cowney? How does the speech in the film more broadly relate to the book?

# MAY 2022



## ***Pauli Murray: A Personal and Political Life***

BY TROY R. SAXBY

### READING SCHEDULE

May 2-8 .....	pages 1-93
May 9-15 .....	pages 94-144
May 16-22 .....	pages 145-205
May 23-29 .....	pages 206-292

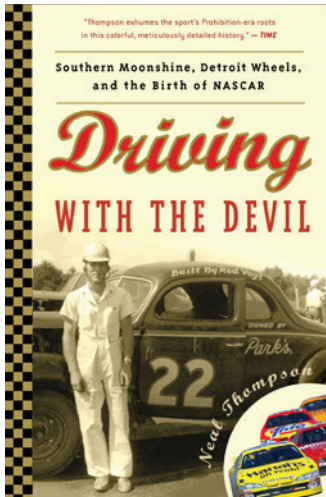
### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did Pauli's childhood experiences shape her life?
- What challenges did Pauli face with her identity in terms of gender and race? In what ways did she confront these challenges?
- What did Pauli mean when she used the term "Jane Crow?"
- How did Pauli participate in both the Civil Rights movement and the movement for women's rights? What were her accomplishments?
- Why did Pauli change careers and become an Episcopal priest later in life? To what extent was this work a continuation of her career?





# JUNE 2022



## *Driving with the Devil: Southern Moonshine, Detroit Wheels, and the Birth of NASCAR*

BY NEAL THOMPSON

### READING SCHEDULE

June 1-5 .....	pages 1-100
June 6-12.....	pages 101-193
June 13-19,.....	pages 194-294
June 20-26 .....	pages 295-366

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is the cultural and economic history of moonshining in Appalachia?
- What hardships did the Great Depression bring to North Carolina? To the region of Appalachia? To the South?
- How is the history of NASCAR connected to the making and sale of illegal alcohol?
- What were some of the consequences of the 18th and the 21st amendments?
- How did World War II impact stock car racing and those involved with the sport? How did it impact spectator sports and popular cultural pastimes across America?
- What are your impressions of NASCAR's key founding figures (Bill France, Red Vogt, Raymond Parks, and Red Byron)?
- In the post-war decades, how did stock car racing and NASCAR evolve? In what ways did it remain the same?
- How would you characterize the history of NASCAR?



# NORTH CAROLINA READS

## Reading Schedule & Discussion Questions

North Carolina Reads is made possible in part by a special initiative grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, “A More Perfect Union”.

Please note that selected books are intended for readers 18 and over and may not be suitable for some audiences.

Any views, findings, conclusions, opinions, or recommendations expressed by our partners and participants do not necessarily represent those of NC Humanities or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Through public humanities programs and grantmaking, NC Humanities connects North Carolinians with cultural experiences that spur dialogue, deepen human connections, and inspire community. North Carolina Humanities is a statewide nonprofit and affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

This Guide may be used with permission from North Carolina Humanities.

North Carolina Humanities © 2022 | (704) 687-1520 | [nchumanities.org](http://nchumanities.org)



North Carolina  
**humanities** | 50 Years

*a more perfect*  
**UNION** NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES