

Bland Simpson

A Professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an author who has worked in music and theater for over thirty-five years.

As a member of the Tony Award-winning string band The Red Clay Ramblers since 1986, Simpson has toured extensively in North America, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and collaborated on the following musicals: *Diamond Studs*, *Hot Grog* and *King Mackerel & The Blues Are Running* (with Jim Wann); *Life on the Mississippi* (with Tommy Thompson); *Cool Spring* and *Tar Heel Voices* (with Jack Herrick); *Kudzu*, *A Southern Musical* (with Jack Herrick and Doug Marlette); and three-time Broadway hit *Fool Moon* (with The Red Clay Ramblers). He contributed to the scores of *Lone Star Love, or The Merry Wives of Windsor, Texas* (Jack Herrick, principal composer/lyricist) and Tony-nominee *Pump Boys & Dinettes* (Jim Wann, principal composer/lyricist). As a Rambler, Simpson also collaborated on the Atlanta Ballet's *Ramblin' Suite* (2002) and the Carolina Ballet's 2005 *Carolina Jamboree* (restaged June 2008).

Simpson is author of the books *Heart of the Country*; *The Great Dismal*; *The Mystery of Beautiful Nell Cropsey*; *Ghost Ship of Diamond Shoals*, and, with photography by his wife Ann Cary Simpson, the nonfiction works *Into the Sound Country* and *The Inner Islands*.

A former chair of the N.C. Writers Conference, he has received the Governor's Award Conservation Communicator of the Year from the N.C. Wildlife Federation; the N.C. Folklore Society's Brown-Hudson Award for writing and music concerning state and regional heritage; and, in 2005, the North Carolina Award in Fine Arts, the state's highest civilian honor.