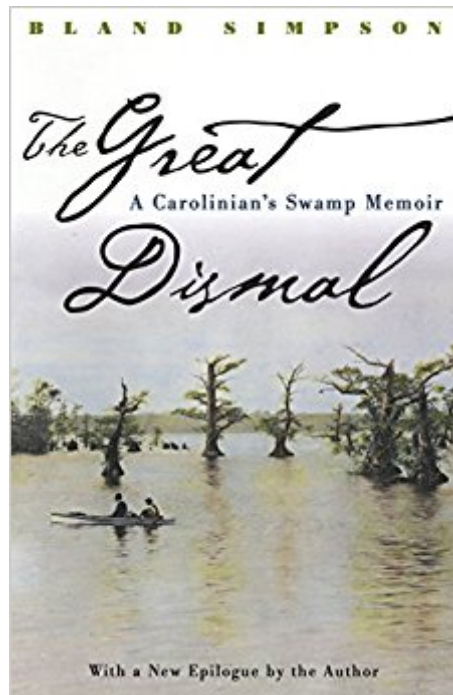




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# The Great Dismal: A Carolinian's Swamp Memoir (Chapel Hill Books)



## Synopsis

Just below the Tidewater area of Virginia, straddling the North Carolina-Virginia line, lies the Great Dismal Swamp, one of America's most mysterious wilderness areas. The swamp has long drawn adventurers, runaways, and romantics, and while many have tried to conquer it, none has succeeded. In this engaging memoir, Bland Simpson, who grew up near the swamp in North Carolina, blends personal experience, travel narrative, oral history, and natural history to create an intriguing portrait of the Great Dismal Swamp and its people. For this edition, he has added an epilogue discussing developments in the region since 1990.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Northernmost of the southern swamps, the Great Dismal sits astride the Virginia-North Carolina border and is perhaps the most mysterious wilderness area in the U.S. It has a colorful history: George Washington invested in a rice farm there; it was a refuge for runaway slaves, home to moonshiners and lumbermen and a rewarding spot for hunters and trappers. Because of a high tannic acid content, the swamp's water has remarkable keeping qualities; the Navy used the water to supply the fleet in the 19th century. Simpson ( *Heart of the Country* ) grew up in the area; here he reminisces about childhood visits to the swamp, talks to oldtimers and describes recent developments. The Great Dismal Swamp Canal, connecting Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound, is the oldest extant manmade waterway in America. The swamp's natural history, encompassing black bear, bobcat, a bird paradise, rare ferns and wildflowers, is also examined in

this engaging portrait. Illustrations. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

YA --For all those readers who mourn the lack of a grandpa or old auntie who'll invite them to sit a spell and listen to tales of bygone days, Simpson offers memoirs of the Great Dismal. In an informed conversational tone, he weaves the physical and social history of both the swamp and those whose lives intertwined with it. He begins with his own boyhood recollections: "I had no notion that anything had ever been different than it was now or ever would be." He moves swiftly back 10,000 years to hypothesize about the first man or woman "to disappear . . . into the Great Dismal Swamp," and then on to the role the swamp played in the lives of such famous men as William Drummond, William Byrd II, and George Washington. Interviews with old-timers such as lifelong swamper Reggie Gregory are intermingled with tales of the lumbermen, escaped slaves, and the flora and fauna. A limited but steady young adult audience will enjoy spending a few hours in the Great Dismal. --Barbara Hawkins, Lake Braddock Secondary, Fairfax County, VACopyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

My family settled in the very early 1600 and spent many generations (some still there to this day) in the NC and Virginia Areas. (Whitaker, Spence, Aydlett, Worthington, Marks, Dinkle, Brite, Williams, Gregory, Bean, Koen, Davis, Harris, Jackson, Brock, Harrison, White, Payne, Smithson and Sawyer--- and got stuck on my family tree. So much of my family tree seems to begin in America around this Great Dismal Swamp (Pasquotank, Camden, Aydlett, Blackwater, Norfolk) Areas that I thought it might be a good read. This book taught me that I have so much more to learn. Thank you- a fun easy read!

Bland Simpson is a delightful author. His books are well researched, as this one is, and capture the essence of the place he writes about. The history is well told as are the personal stories of the people of the Dismal Swamp who have been there for hundreds of years. The beauty of the place is well described. This was a pleasant read.

This book was purchased for my wife, she has enjoyed it greatly, coming from an area of North Carolina where the Great Dismal Swamp is located she enjoyed reading about it.

Arrived quickly, as described.

Haven't read book yet! Will surely add comment when I am prepared to do so. Have a lot of nooks on bedside table right now. That is books...

To those who love American History will love the realistic and descriptive view of the Dismal Swamp. It is rich with events of African Americans as well, the connections the early settlers had with the Spanish, Native Indians, French, Dutch and British. It describes the Dismal Swamp so well, I visualised being there myself and sharing the feelings of those worked, struggled and lived and died in the Swamp. It is the story of a man who shared his love for the Swamp and the history behind it. I have made plans to visit there this Spring. Take some time over coffee or tea and start enjoying your journey to the Dismal Swamp from the beginning of George Washington personal interest in the Swamp to the 20th Century. For anyone who has any roots to the Southwest region of Virginia, you will be pleasantly surprised. I found one of my husband's ancestors quoted in the book. Holga Reyes

Very interesting book. I enjoyed it immensely. I was reared in that area and knew some of the people mentioned in the book. Now reside on the other coast. It was like a trip home.

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