

Sheppard, Muriel S. Earley ^[1]

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By Elmer D. Johnson, 1994

6 Oct. 1898–6 Feb. 1951

Muriel S. Earley Sheppard, writer, was born in Andover, N.Y., the daughter of Florence Eliza Stephens and Crayton I. Earley. In December 1909, when she was eleven, her father had a local printer issue a small volume of poems by her entitled *Little Poems by a Little Girl*. In 1920 she was graduated from [Alfred University](#) ^[2] magna cum laude and on 21 December married civil engineer Mark Sheppard III. Their only child, Mark Earley, born on 15 July 1927, became an anesthesiologist. Muriel Sheppard was a Unitarian and a Democrat.

Moving to North Carolina in the 1920s, she became a feature writer for the [Asheville](#) ^[3] newspapers and established her home in the nearby Blue Ridge Mountains. In 1935 her major work, *Cabins in the Laurel* ^[4], was published by [The University of North Carolina Press](#) ^[5]. It was an account of the Toe River Valley in western North Carolina, including much on the history, traditions, and way of life of the people there. The book was copiously illustrated with photographs by Mrs. Bayard Wooten of Chapel Hill. Well received and favorably reviewed, it remained in print for many years and was most recently reissued in 1991. Muriel Sheppard continued to write feature articles for the [Asheville](#) ^[3] papers and for the *Pittsburgh Press*. She also wrote magazine articles for a variety of publications ranging from *American Home* to the *South Atlantic Quarterly*.

Her last book was published by [The University of North Carolina Press](#) ^[5] in 1947. Entitled *Cloud by Day: The Story of Coal and Coke and People* ^[6], it was an account of life among the coal miners of western Pennsylvania. She died at her home in Barrackville, W.Va., and was buried in Hillside Cemetery, Andover, N.Y.

References:

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Origin - location:

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[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press](#).^[12]

1 January 1994 | Johnson, Elmer D.

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