



4 Alabama authors to add to your 'to-be-read' list



BY ELLA WALTON · LAST UPDATED MAY 13, 2025

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Auburn Oil Co. Booksellers in Auburn, as well as many other independent bookstores in Alabama, have sections for customers to peruse books by local authors. (Ella Walton / The Bama Buzz)

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When many of us think of Alabamian authors, our minds often go to the literary greats like Harper Lee, Kathryn Windham + Fannie Flagg.

However, there are [many authors in the state](#) with amazing work you may not have read yet. We've compiled a list of 4 authors, either born or raised in Alabama, that you may want to check out.

Keep reading to learn about these Alabamian authors (listed in no particular order)!

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Leslie Hooton

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Leslie Hooton's books are sold at Auburn Oil Co. Booksellers in Downtown Auburn. (Ella Walton / The Bama Buzz)

Leslie Hooton, a three-time published author, was born in Roanoke, Ala. A '80 graduate of Auburn University, Hooton published her debut novel, [Before Anyone Else](#) in March 2020.

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An advertisement for Children's of Alabama and ACCS Association Center. The top part features a smiling young boy in a wheelchair with the text 'Amazing happens here.' and the Children's of Alabama logo. The bottom part features a man using a surveying instrument with the text 'Learn Fast. Work Smart. Rapid training for in-demand jobs in Alabama.' and a 'GET STARTED' button. The ACCS Association Center logo is also present.



Her second book, [The Secret of Rainy Days](#) was published shortly after + takes place in a fictional Alabama town called Erob. [After Everyone Else](#), Hooton's third book + sequel to "Before Everyone Else," was published in June 2022 + continues the captivating story of Bailey Edgeworth.

"*Before Anyone Else* is the romantic debut we have been waiting for, a coming of age novel that is both deeply moving and creatively beautiful. With wit and dazzle, Leslie Hooton takes us through both a love story and also the cut throat restaurant business. With charm to spare, this novel is a powerful story with a dose of hostess gold woven in for good measure."

~ Patti Callahan Henry, NYT Bestselling author of *Becoming Mrs. Lewis* and *The Favorite Daughter*

Hooton currently resides in Charlotte, NC, but can be contacted [here](#) to request her attendance at book clubs + conferences!

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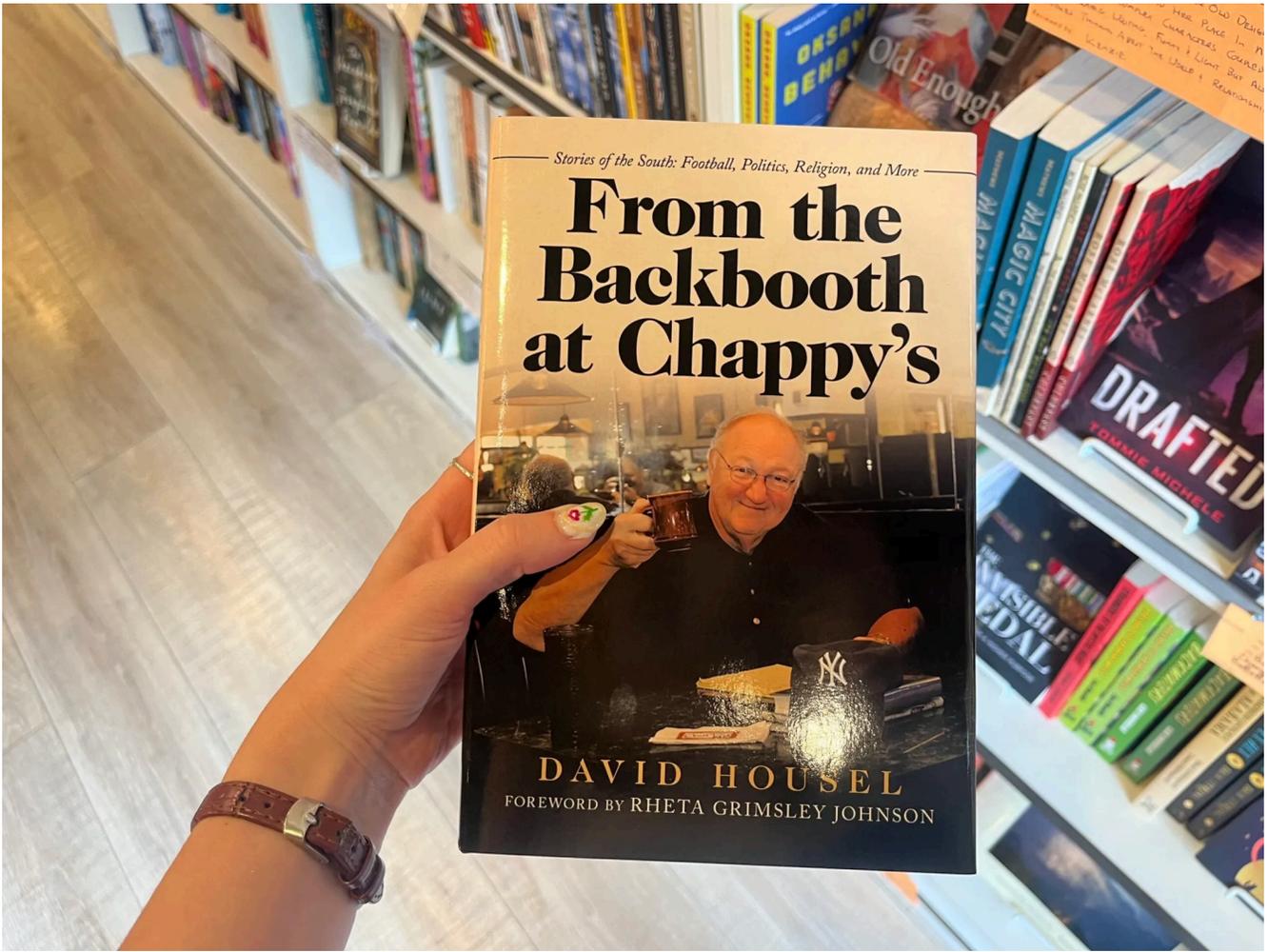


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David Housel

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After David Houseel spent decades in the Auburn athletics sports department, he decided to reflect on everything from football to politics + religion in his books. (Ella Walton / The Bama Buzz)

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David Houseel, born in Go

rn University.

As Houseel + friends mad
Chappy's Deli, Houseel wa

in the backbooth of
[the Backbooth at](#)



[Chappy's: Stories of the South: Football, Politics, Religion, and More](#) (2021).

He has many other titles to his name, including [Auburn University Football Vault: The Story of the Auburn Tigers, 1892-2007](#) (2007), [Glory Days Auburn: The Greatest Victories in Tigers History](#) (2008), + [Alabama-Auburn Rivalry Football Vault](#) (2009).

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“Housel knows he’s been pigeonholed by some as the “Auburn guy”, and he’s fine with it. After all, it gave him a long career that took him far beyond the Plains. However, he wanted the book to show that he was more than that.”

~ Drew Taylor in [a 2021 article](#) written for CBS 42

Rachel Hawkins

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Rachel Hawkins' 2024 novel *The Heiress* can be found in Well Red, a locally owned Auburn bookseller + coffee shop. (Ella Walton / The Bama Buzz)

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Although Rachel Hawkins grew up in Dothan, Ala. Her novel *The Girl on the Train* was dubbed "a gothic thriller"



bestselling author grew up in Dothan, Ala. Her novel *The Girl on the Train* (2015), was



Her 2022 thriller, [Reckless Girls](#), also made the *New York Times* list. Hawkins' second most recent novel, [The Villa](#), came out in 2023, while her most recent, [The Heiress](#), came out in 2024.

The gothic-thriller writer also pens paranormal romantic comedies under the name Erin Sterling. Among her long list of paranormal novels is [The Ex Hex](#) (2021), a *New York Times* + *USA Today* bestseller.

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Other titles + series include:

- [The Wedding Witch](#) (2024)
- [The Kiss Curse](#) (2022)
- [The "Royals" series](#) (2019)
- [Ruby and Olivia](#) (2016)
- [Journey's End](#) (2016)
- [The "Hex Hall" series](#) (2010-2013)

“The reigning queen of the Gothic thriller.”

~ *Entertainment Weekly*

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Hawkins currently resides in Auburn, where she obtained her English-literature degree from Auburn University. Her newest gothic suspense novel, [The Storm](#), is set to release on Jan. 6, 2026.

[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)

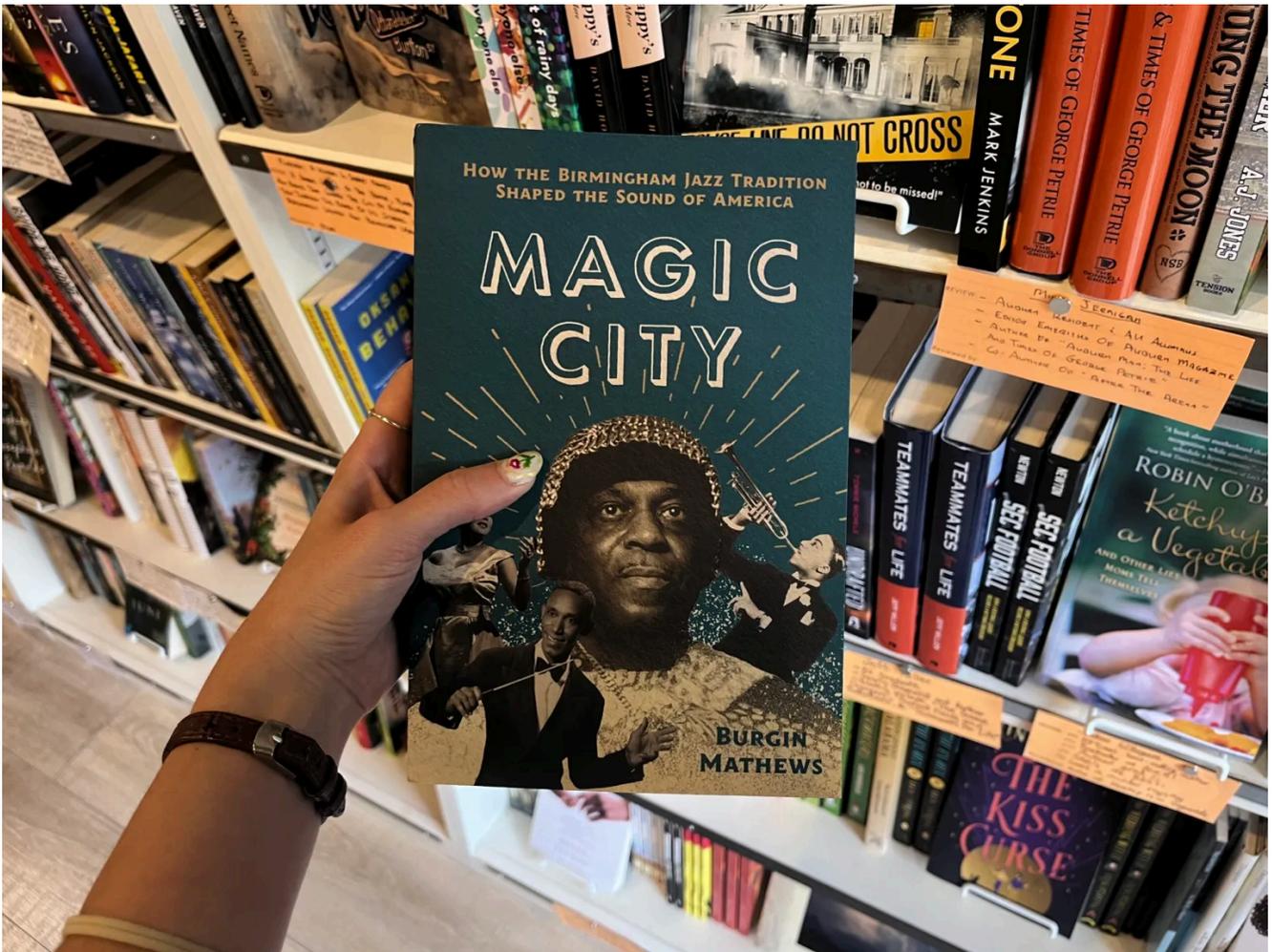
Burgin Mathews

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Burgin Mathews is a writer, a radio host + the founding director of the nonprofit Southern Music Research Center. (Ella Walton / The Bama Buzz)

Burgin Mathews was born in Montgomery, Ala., but presently calls Birmingham home. His most recent book, [Magic City](#), was published in November 2023 + explores how the city of Birmingham helped shape the jazz scene in America.

The book was built off Mathews' 2012 book, *Doc: The Story of a Birmingham Jazz Man*, which follows the story of Frank "Doc" Adams, a jazz elder.

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“One of the many virtues of Burgin Mathews’ fascinating and rewarding book is his examination or rather exhumation of the “Magic City” ... Well-written, thoroughly researched and documented, with arresting photographs, *Magic City* is an original and valuable contribution to jazz historiography.”

~ *Jazz Journal*

[Website](#)

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An advertisement for the ACCS Association Center. The background is dark blue. On the left, there are two smaller images: one of a woman in a hard hat and safety vest, and another of a man in a green shirt using a surveying instrument. The ACCS Association Center logo is in the bottom left corner. In the top right, there is a logo for "Skills for Success" with three vertical bars. The main text reads "Learn Fast. Work Smart." in large white font, followed by "Rapid training for in-demand jobs in Alabama." in a smaller white font. A red button with white text says "GET STARTED".





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📖 ALABAMIAN AUTHORS: Although many of us know about the literary greats like Harper Lee, Kathryn Windham + Fannie Flagg, we've rounded up 4 authors born or raised in Alabama that you may not know about 📌

★ Rachel Hawkins | @ladyhawkins

★ David Houzel

★ Leslie Hooton | @lesliehooton

★ Burgin Mathews

? Do you have a favorite local author? Let us know in the comments!

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Ella Walton

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An advertisement banner for Skills for Success. On the left, a man in a green shirt is using a surveying instrument. On the right, a dark blue background contains the text "Skills for Success" with a logo of three vertical bars, "Learn Fast. Work Smart." in large white font, "Rapid training for in-demand jobs in Alabama." in smaller white font, and a red "GET STARTED" button. The ACCS Association Center logo is in the bottom left corner of the banner.

