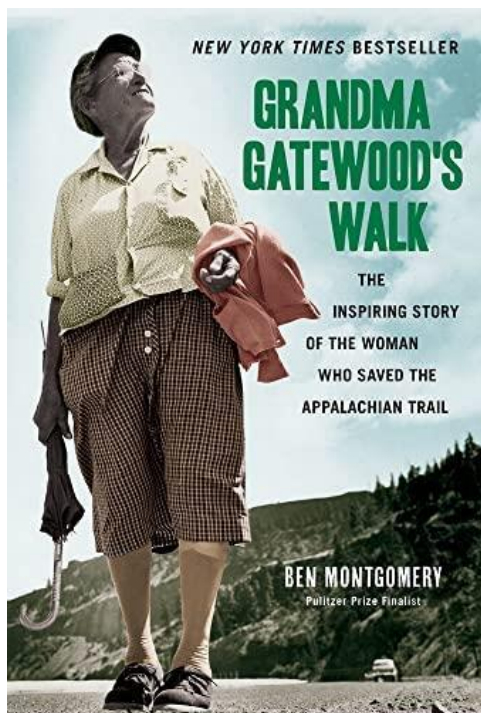


*Grandma Gatewood's Walk: The Inspiring Story of the Woman Who Saved the Appalachian Trail* by Ben Montgomery

Welcome to Radio Bristol Book Club where readers from BCM and the Bristol Public Library come together each month to celebrate and explore books inspired by our region's rich Appalachian cultural and musical heritage! We invite you to read along and then listen to Radio Bristol on the fourth Thursday of each month at 12:00 noon when we dig deep into the themes and questions raised by the books, learn more about the authors, and celebrate the joys of being a bookworm!

In 1955 Emma Gatewood, aged 67, told her family she was going for a walk. The next anyone heard from her, she had already made it 800 miles along the 2,050 mile long Appalachian Trail. She brought with her only one change of clothes, less than \$200, and her determination to do what she said she would do. In this way, Grandma Gatewood became the first woman to hike the entire trail alone. She then became the first person (male or female) to hike the trail two and then three times. Media interest in her hikes led to heightened public interest in the Appalachian Trail and increased trail preservation efforts that likely saved it from extinction. In addition to the Appalachian Trail she also hiked the Oregon Trail at age 71 and worked on a section of what would become the Buckeye trail. Gatewood passed away in 1973 and was posthumously inducted into the Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame in 2012.

Through interviews with surviving family members and hikers Gatewood met along the way, newspaper, magazine, and tv interviews, Gatewood's personal diaries, trail journals, and correspondences Ben Montgomery uncovers the remarkable story of Gatewood's physical journey and intersperses it with her inspiring life story that led her along the Appalachian Trail.



Ben Montgomery grew up in Oklahoma and studied journalism at Arkansas State University. After graduating, he worked for the Courier in Russellville, Ark., the Standard-Times in San Angelo, Texas, the Times Herald-Record in New York's Hudson River Valley and the Tampa Tribune before joining the

Tampa Bay Times, Florida's largest newspaper, in 2006. In 2010, he was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in local reporting and won the Dart Award and Casey Medal for a series called "For Their Own Good," about abuse at Florida's oldest reform school. In addition to the New York Times-bestselling *Grandma Gatewood's Walk*, which won the 2014 Outdoor Book Award, Montgomery has published several books including the *The Leper Spy*, *The Man Who Walked Backward*, and *A Shot in the Moonlight*.



Please make plans to join us on Thursday, December 28<sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm for our discussion of *Grandma Gatewood's Walk: The Inspiring Story of the Woman Who Saved the Appalachian Trail*. You can find us on the dial at 100.1 FM, streaming live on Radio Bristol, or via the Radio Bristol app. The book is available at the Bristol Public Library, so be sure to pick up a copy and read it ahead of time. The librarians will be happy to help you find it! We look forward to exploring this book on-air, and if you have thoughts or questions about the book that you would like to share with our readers, you can email [info@birthplaceofcountrymusic.org](mailto:info@birthplaceofcountrymusic.org) (Subject line: Radio Bristol Book Club) – your book insights might appear on air with us!

*Erika Barker is Curatorial Manager at the Birthplace of Country Music Museum and an avid reader.*