



NEWSLETTER

President's Letter

Dear MKR Society Friends –

This will be a very different President's Letter from my usual nature musings. But I hope you will find it an interesting and entertaining change.

I enjoy my yearlong search for MKR Conference silent auction treasures. This is our only fundraiser, so I take it very seriously. My sources have been severely limited due to the COVID pandemic. There are now no dusty "antique" bookstore or yard sale haunts. No visits to folks who inquire if I am interested in their collections. So, I have spent more time searching online. I am acquiring an awesome collection to share when we can return to our annual conferences. I had such fun when I started it many years ago. The quest remains a popular hobby and continues as one of my contributions to the society. I love to see the socialization aspects of the auctions as folks discuss their collections and their excitement when they are able to acquire a much sought-after treasure.

Imagine my joy, when I learned of an MKR collection of books from folks who actually knew MKR. I sent my money right off to the grandson sight unseen. I paid a very dear amount as a couple of the books were personally signed by MKR.

Soon, the much-anticipated expensive shipment plus \$49 postage cost arrived. My initial reaction was one of total dismay. The books were dirty, stained, torn, discolored, and with frequent notes in the margins. But the worst horror of all was that several page tears had been repaired with scotch tape. My book loving nature was crushed. These books were in terrible shape, not just well read and loved.

But, after careful "research," I became quite excited. For within the pages, the real treasures soon became apparent. In a first edition of *South Moon Under* was the following personal note from MKR:

"April 1, 1933 - To Marguerite and Arthur Corcoran - who, very kindly and probably foolishly, are helping about the business of another book—Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings"

After more research and emails to the grandson, I learned that they were close neighbors and friends to Marjorie. They lived near to Cross Creek and later Ponte Vedra Beach near MKR's Crescent Beach home. Marguerite Pace Corcoran also reviewed books for a major NYC newspaper. A copy of her review of *South Moon Under* was "glued," [yikes] to its inside cover. I will print some of this review on the next page.

(cont'd on page 2)

President's Letter (cont'd)

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“Florida Scrub, *South Moon Under*—MKR—Scribner [\$2] Florida tourists viewing the Florida Scrub from an Ocklawaha River steamer, find it picturesque but not enticing. Even most Florida Crackers think the scrub too bewilderingly wild to live in. But this impenetrable-seeming wilderness of pine and sand was just suited to Landry Jacklin’s taste. Onetime moonshiner in Ca’lina, he had killed a revenue man and fled to Florida; the scrub seemed the safest place he could find” – excerpt from Corcoran’s review

A second treasure was contained in *Frontier Eden* by Gordon Bigelow. Taped inside his book was an envelope from Bigelow, Department of English, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, [no state listed], to Marguerite Corcoran, St John’s Ave, Jacksonville, Florida. It contained the following handwritten letter:

8, December 67 –

Dear Mrs. Corcoran

Thank you for your kind words about “Frontier Eden”. A doting parent always likes to hear his children spoken well of. Since you knew Marjorie and the county, I value your reaction in especial. I am at work on another writing, but as always at this early stage, I feel as if I were in a swamp, thrashing around for some hard ground to stand on. And as always at this stage, I wonder why I started. Maybe it’s because it feels so good when I stop.

Thank you again,

Sincerely,
Gordon Bigelow

I hope you have enjoyed these little snippets of MKR history with the Corcorans as much as I have.

Sincerely,
Elaine Bradbury

Marguerite and Arthur Corcoran

As an extension of the details included in Elaine Bradbury's President's Letter, the executive members of the Society received this fascinating letter from Jeff Hartzler, grandson of the Corcorans, along with information about the books he found.

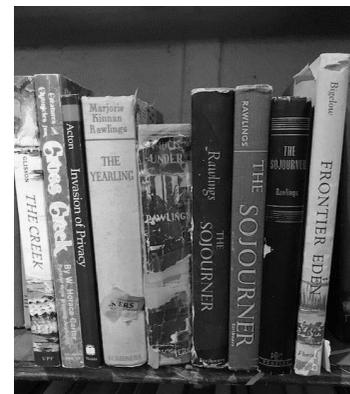
October 15, 2020 – (excerpted) My maternal grandmother and grandfather were self-proclaimed 'neighbors' of Ms. Rawlings. As a young teenager, I recall my grandmother, Marguerite Corcoran, telling me many stories like the hot scrub pine breezy day that Marjorie told her housekeeper, Olive Oil, to 'get some legs' for luncheon. Soon two hippity hoppity giant frogs wriggled in the hands of Olive Oil. After a loud Thump-ka-Thump to their heads the frogs' legs were plopped into the frying pan for luncheon.

Marguerite and Arthur Corcoran were very involved with the Wilson Cypress Company HQ in Palatka. They knew Marjorie both at Cross Creek and later, after my grandparents built an 'all cypress' oceanfront home in Ponte Vedra (since torn down and replaced with a modern mansion home) they would 'meet up' in St. Augustine with Marjorie. Despite some negativity my grandmother perceived in Marjorie's beau, many great times were had at the Flagler Hotel and elsewhere. It was my belief that Marjorie preferred the sights and sounds back in Cross Creek.

I graduated from The University of the South at Sewanee (Tn.) with Honors in English. When I was given a choice of subject matter for a required Honors paper, I chose to do mine on MKR. My grandmother was alive then and I intended to interview her and to 'get down' the many stories she had told me. Regrettably, my Honors 'tutor'/advisor did not know much (or anything) about MKR and insisted that I instead, write about Flannery O'Conner. Though I enjoyed my research and subsequent paper on Ms. O'Conner, I have regretted not interviewing my grandmother about her life in the early days of 'old' Florida alongside the rivers and scrub country. I did enjoy many fishing trips with my beloved Uncle Fred Merrill, of Palatka, way up the Ocklawaha.

I can think of no better place for this box of treasure, than to be sent 'back home' to Marjorie.

Jeff Hartzler, Med
Jacksonville Native
Albuquerque since 1985



Conference Update

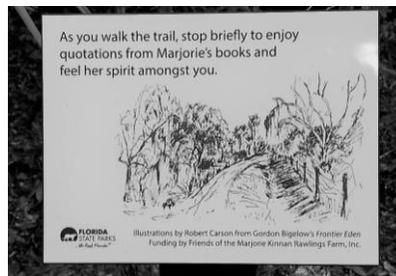
Trustees of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society appreciate your patience as we continue to monitor the spread of COVID-19. Given the continued risks associated with large groups, the Trustees have voted to suspend our annual conference for Spring 2021. We will continue to update members of the Society about virtual and in-person gatherings through our newsletters, our website, and the MKR State Park and other community organizations during this time. Thank you for your continued support.

Updates from the Farm

Scott Spaulding, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings State Park

Getting Back to Normal – Well, almost normal that is. On December 3rd we resumed guided tours of the farmhouse. In order to maintain visitor and staff safety we have reduced the number of tours given each day from six to four and are limiting the tour size to 20, with 10 or less entering the house at a time to provide ample space between the groups. Facial coverings are required inside the farmhouse and most of the discussion takes place outside the farmhouse. The tours have been well received and we are excited to be able to allow visitors in the farmhouse once again. When coming for a tour, which are held Thursday – Sunday at 11am and 1, 2 and 3 pm, please bring exact change for the tour fee as change is not available and credit cards are not accepted at this time.

Marjorie's Quotation Trail Sign Project – Last year the Friends of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc. funded 10 signs to be posted along the nature trail. Each sign includes a quote from one of Marjorie's books. Just recently Volunteers Andy and Terry Brightman installed the signs. What a wonderful addition to the historic state park and just another way to inspire visitors to read Marjorie's books. What makes it even more special are the Robert Carson drawings that accompany each sign. Be sure to walk the trail the next time you visit the park!



Next Generation – In August, Rick Mulligan took an enthusiastic English Instructor from Alabama on a tour of the MKR property. Mrs. Jess Woods taught *The Yearling* to her 7th grade students this fall and wrote Rick to let him know their thoughts on the book. Here are excerpts from some of our favorites:

- *I connected with Jody and his love for animals. I have a heart for animals as well. This book has characters that you can easily identify with. – Judah*
- *I appreciate The Yearling because of the exciting adventures and hunts, the sad but gripping tales, and the heart that it has. It left me deeply satisfied after I read this old but touching book! – Zachary*
- *I appreciate this book because it taught me things I didn't know before. For example, I learned that I should keep a more watchful eye out walking in nature, because one day I might find something cool because I was observant of the things around me. I think this would be a good book to read because it's a very well written book that has adventure, excitement, a bit of drama, relationship, and some well written plot twists. – Grace C.*
- *My personal favorite thing about The Yearling is the realness of it. The book doesn't have an unrealistic happy ending that many books now-days have. It is able to get the point across that death, loss, and fighting is sadly part of human nature. The book doesn't dim the fact that humans are imperfect; in fact, it finds ways to show it like in the Forresters case. But most importantly it doesn't hide the sting of death. With loveable characters, imagery that can draw anyone in and realistic circumstances "the Yearling" is a book I personally recommend to everyone. – Grace H.*

Silent Fundraiser – Elaine Bradbury continues to collect items for our next Silent Auction Fundraiser. Any MKR books or memorabilia you are willing to donate will be appreciated. The auction also includes books, crafts, foods, or memorabilia with a Florida theme. If you have published a book, please consider contributing a signed copy to the auction. All contributions must be in good, like-new condition. Contact Elaine at loon44@icloud.com with questions or to donate.



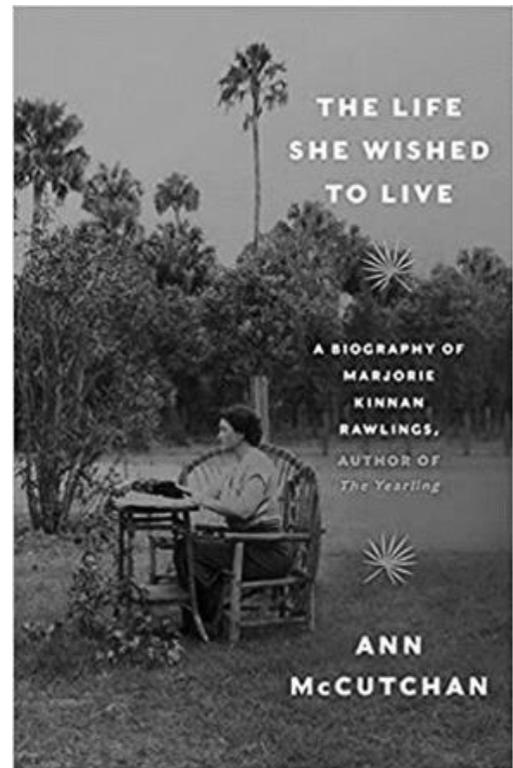
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MARJORIE
Reclaim #FloridaWoman

“‘A Unique Perfection’: Quarantine Healing with the Southern Magnolia” by Leslie Kempe Poole may be found in a new series, Lessons from the Marjories, where Florida women explore connections between the three Marjories and their own lives. - <https://themarjorie.org/lessons-from-the-marjories/>

Reviewers praise *The Life She Wished to Live* by Ann McCutchan, available April 2021:

An affectionate biography of the beloved author...Work by work, McCutchan carefully details Rawlings's gradual development as a professional writer who keenly absorbed [Cross Creek, Florida's] history, culture, and dialects...An all-inclusive and intimate assessment that could help Rawlings attract a new generation of readers. - Kirkus Reviews

*It's been a quarter of a century since we've had a new biography of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, and Ann McCutchan delivers. From Rawlings's early newspaper days to the triumph of *The Yearling*, McCutchan shows us a writer of complexity, ambition, and conviction. A deeply researched and satisfying read. - Martha Ackmann, author of *These Fevered Days**



In January the **Florida Channel** visited the farm to conduct an interview about Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. The interview will be woven into a larger project on the Florida Artists Hall of Fame for their Florida Crossroads series. The focus will be the history of the Hall of Fame and the process for being inducted, and they wanted to highlight some prominent inductees including the first two, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Ernest Hemingway. We are glad they stopped by and look forward to seeing the episode. No air date has been set yet, but it will likely be broadcast this Summer.

Opera Orlando – Work continues on a commissioned opera based on Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings's *The Secret River*. On Saturday, April 24th, there will be a piano workshop at 2 pm to present selections of this work in progress with an estimated run time of 60 minutes and no intermission. For more details, visit: <https://operaorlando.org/the-secret-river>

The Voice of the Hounds Still Echo

by George R. Harper

(excerpted for space – more stories to come from Rusty!)

Marjorie Kinnan Rawling's legacy as a storyteller of the Ocala Scrub is so woven and ingrained in my being from my early childhood that I have found it daunting to write about. A desire to try to capture my deep love for the Ocala Scrub nurtured by three generations of my forefathers and the stories they told me invoke powerful emotions of deep love for this hallowed ground. I am a member of two pioneer, cracker families, the Harpers and the Raulersons, of Pierson, Florida, located five miles East of the St. Johns River. Being friends and hunting companions of Barney Dillard, who lived in nearby Astor, Florida, my grandfathers were invited by Barney to attend the two bear hunts with Marjorie in her research for *The Yearling*. Both my maternal grandfather Herman Raulerson and my paternal grandfather George R. Harper also attended these bear hunts years before the two families were linked by marriage. Harry Harper, brother of great grandfather George R. Harper, brought the bear dogs and was immortalized in *Cross Creek* as Marsh Harper (Ch 19). Barney would ride over to the old Harper place in Pierson and visit regularly, sitting for hours at a time on the front porch spinning tall tales. Family members told me he had an amazing dialect with one story flowing into another in an almost poetic, rhythmic fashion. It is no wonder Marjorie found such fascination with Barney; he was by all accounts a very entertaining character. One other family connection I have to a central figure among Marjorie's contacts for research on the Ocala Scrub was that my great-grandfather's brother, Noah Harper, married Ida Long, the daughter of Melvin (Calvin Long's brother) on January 15, 1915.

On one of the bear hunts, the hunters and Rawlings met up at Jumping Gully and started out shortly after daylight. Even on such an historic hunt as this, details of the actual hunt are sparse since a bear wasn't killed. The first drive of the morning was made east of Jumping Gully in Logan's Cove toward Seven-mile Branch and Astor Park. A bear was jumped on this or the subsequent hunt that occurred to the west in Bear Bay, north of Wildcat Lake. The bear stymied the dogs and went unseen. Papa Raulerson told me that at lunch time on one of the bear hunts with Barney Dillard, Marjorie Rawlings and others, they gathered up Uncle Harry's dogs and returned to Jumping Gully, a crystal-clear sand bottomed branch that flows out of Gobbler Bay and ultimately into Blue Creek and the west bank of the St. Johns River. Since there was a boy of about twelve named Frank Bisby, Jr., along on the hunt, Papa made a flutter-mill during their nooning for young Frank with Marjorie intently watching. In *The Yearling* (Chs. 1, 33), Rawlings effectively used the flutter-mill as a symbol of Jody's childhood and his coming of age during the year described in the book. Forty years later Papa would build a flutter-mill for me at Silver Glen Springs.

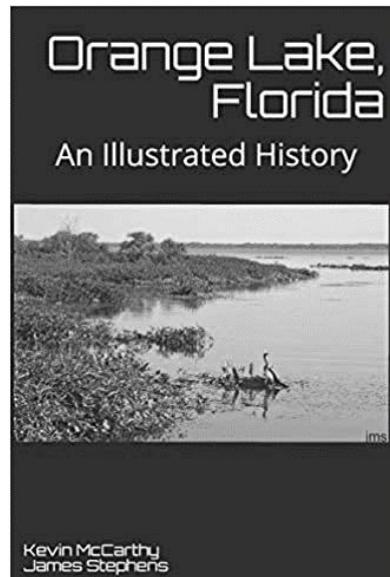
My great-aunt Jessie Raulerson Hayman, older sister of my grandfather Herman Raulerson, recounted the following incident to me after her brother had passed away. Aunt Jessie was an accomplished woman, and, when I visited with her in her later years, she was as sharp as a tack with very clear and detailed memories. She told me the following story. She was staying at the Raulerson house on Menton Road in Pierson when one of the hunts that Papa attended occurred. That night considerably after dark a hard rain was falling outside. Upon hearing a noise downstairs that sounded like someone entering the house through the screen door off the porch, she went down to see what it was. Aunt Jessie encountered her brother Herman and Marjorie Rawlings drying off with towels in the foyer of the old farmhouse. A brief introduction was made, but, as both seemed very tipsy, she retreated back upstairs to her room. Both Marjorie and Papa were gone early the next morning when she got up. Later, Papa explained that due to the hard rain and being after dark following the hunt, he offered and Marjorie accepted to stay the night there. Nothing was mentioned of sleeping arrangements, but Aunt Jessie told the story with a slight wink and nod. This story was never told by my grandfather to my knowledge. My mother, Suzanne Raulerson Harper, confirmed to me what I already knew about him, that he never would have told that story to anyone, especially his family. I believe he would have been afraid that any recanting of this story could have been perceived as braggadocious due to Marjorie's fame and notoriety.

From Our Trustees

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If you were on a sinking ship and had to make for a lifeboat, what book would you take along with you? You believe you wouldn't even think of books? Well, we just heard of one man who did. When the U.S.S. Lexington was sinking, and the order to abandon ship was given, Signalmen Jimmy Peters ran back to his locker and grabbed Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' recent Book-of-the-Month selection, "Cross Creek." "I hadn't finished it and it's a swell book," Peters explained later. He was picked up from his lifeboat by a destroyer, and for the next two weeks "Cross Creek" made the rounds of the destroyer's crew. From "Cross Creek" to "Cross Coral Sea" is some swim, according to Signalmen Peters.

David Nolan found this item from Edwin Seaver's syndicated book column, which was printed around the country in November 1942, during WWII. This printing came from the *Tuskegee News* in Tuskegee, Alabama, just a few miles from Norton Baskin's hometown of Union Springs, Alabama. It was printed on Thursday, November 5, 1942, on page 4.



Kevin McCarthy and Jim Stephens have published a new book on Orange Lake, available through Amazon.com.

Tampa Bay Times – Perspective – November 29, 2020 – Gary Mormino, scholar in residence at Florida Humanities, published a piece titled "Florida Strong" in *Forum* that paid tribute to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and *The Yearling*. After describing Jody's return at the end of the novel, Mormino writes, "The melancholic scene provides a message for the Sunshine State in 2020 . . . if history is any guide, Floridians will hold on and come back stronger." As Pa Baxter says to Jody, "You've done come back different. You've taken a punishment. You ain't a yearling no longer."



In memoriam – The Society mourns the passing of Hilda Goff, one of our faithful conference attendees. She attended the conference each year with a contingent from Stetson. Hilda died of a stroke shortly before Christmas.

Membership and Conference Registration Prize

The Membership Year for the MKR Society is July through June corresponding with our programming, conference and publication cycle. **Please take a good look at your mailing label to see if your renewal date has passed.** If so, please consider renewing by mailing your check (\$15 Student, \$30 Individual, \$40 Family, \$50 Sustaining, \$100 Sponsor, \$250 Patron, \$500 Benefactor, or \$1000 Life) to MKR Society, c/o Anne Pierce, 249 Herman Drive, Hawthorne, FL 32640. We are always looking for new members. Just ask Anne for membership cards.

The person who registers the most new members wins a FREE Registration our next conference. Here are some ideas to solicit members:

- Encourage friends and adult children to join;
- Give a gift of a student membership (\$15) to children, grandchildren, or other students;
- Speak to neighbors and those at your local library or historical society about joining;
- Local groups such as historical societies, book clubs, garden clubs, or libraries are always looking for guest speakers. MKR's work offers so many areas for discussion such as literary, cooking, gardening, history, travel, and wildlife.

**Note: MKR Society Membership Year is from July 1-June 30. Consult the mailing label for your renewal date.*

To learn more about the society and information on the annual conference, visit our website, <http://rawlingssociety.org/>, or check out our Facebook page and Yahoo Group.

Rawlings Society
PO Box 117005
Gainesville, FL 32611-7005

IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

Please check your address label. The date that you see on the label is the date your dues are due. If your membership is current, we thank you! Renewal card at:
<http://rawlingssociety.org/>

