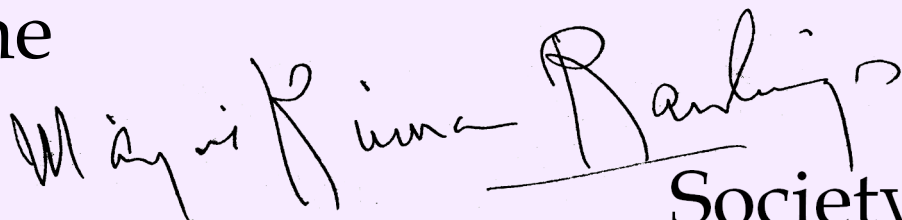


The



Society Newsletter

Volume XXVI, Number 1

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society Newsletter

September 2021

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President's Letter

Dear MKR Society Friends,

The pleasure of sharing a good reading experience is much like the excitement of spreading good news. And Ann McCutchan's new literary biography of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *The Life She Wished to Live*, is just that.

I love learning where Ann's title comes from—see page 6, for example. I love, too, understanding much more fully Rawlings' burning desire to write as well as gaining deeper insight to Marjorie's "extraordinary" relationship with her editor Maxwell Perkins. I'm glad Ann visits at length Marjorie's friendship with "wonderful" Zora Neale Hurston so I can appreciate her argument that this was Marjorie's coming to terms with her own racism and white privilege. As I have heard historian David Nolan say on more than one occasion, had Rawlings lived, she might have been the one local white person in St. Augustine to speak in support of the city's civil rights demonstrations in 1964.

Before the year ends, we have an opportunity to participate in some special events to honor Rawlings. Claude Jarman, who was cast as young Jody in *The Yearling* movie of 1946, will be visiting Cross Creek on Dec 11 and 12. This 75th anniversary of the motion picture is sponsored by The Friends of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm (for more information see their website at www.MarjorieKinnanRawlings.org). And, it must be recognized with a deep sigh, that it's becoming increasingly rare to be in the presence of someone who knew Marjorie. Do come if Covid and your comfort level allow.

Thanks to our Executive Director Flo Turcotte, the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society is tentatively planning a conference for next spring.

In the meantime, enjoy the return of our Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings website, thanks to Drs. Anna Lillios and Ashley Lear.

I send my end-of-the-summer best to you and yours as I write from a chair just outside the chicken run, where the hens dustbathe and talk about the eggs they've laid.

Darien Andreu



IN RECENT NEWS:

June 2021

Ellen Giallonardo and Pam Davis of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society Educational Outreach Committee are pleased to announce that classroom sets of *The Secret River* were donated to two deserving Tampa schools: St. Peter Claver and Morning Star School. The students were thrilled with the beautiful books.

Morning Star School of Tampa was chosen to receive the books because of its commitment to students with special needs since 1961.
<https://www.morningstartampa.org>

St. Peter Claver Catholic School was chosen for its tireless work educating the underprivileged students of Tampa since 1894!
<https://www.stpeterclavercatholicsschool.org>



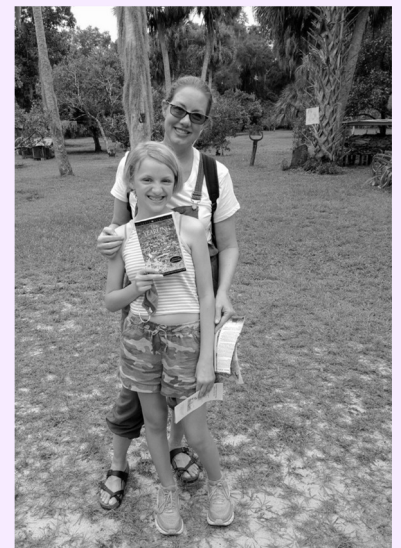
Ellen Giallonardo with Mr. Gerard Carrier, Acting Principal, St. Peter Claver (patron saint of slaves)



Can you find the Trustees among the Morning Star School students?

July 2021

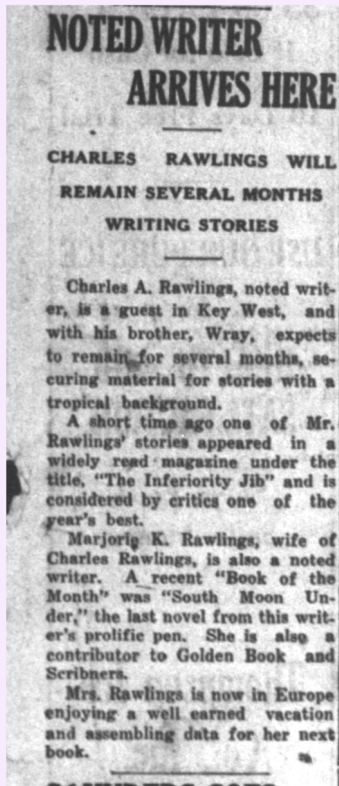
Scott Spaulding, MKR State Park Manager, writes that a copy of *The Yearling* was given to a recent young visitor, Tess Pacetti who, although she lives in Houston, Texas, bears a wonderful old Florida Minorcan family name!





YESTERDAY'S NEWS:

The *Key West Citizen* had a front-page story in its issue of October 30, 1933:



NOTED WRITER
ARRIVES HERE
CHARLES RAWLINGS WILL
REMAIN SEVERAL MONTHS
WRITING STORIES

Charles A. Rawlings, noted writer, is a guest in Key West, and with his brother, Wray, expects to remain for several months, securing material for stories with a tropical background.

A short time ago one of Mr. Rawlings' stories appeared in a widely read magazine under the title "The Inferiority Jib" and is considered by critics one of the year's best.

Marjorie K. Rawlings, wife of Charles Rawlings, is also a noted writer. A recent "Book of the Month" was "South Moon Under," the last novel from this writer's prolific pen. She is also a contributor to Golden Book and Scribners.

Mrs. Rawlings is now in Europe enjoying a well earned vacation and assembling data for her next book.

Those who attended the last Rawlings Society meeting in Tarpon Springs (2019) will remember the talk given there by Leslie Kemp Poole of Rollins College about the little-known writing career of Charles Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' first husband. The story of his mentioned in this article was published in the *Saturday Evening Post* of September 30, 1933. The *Golden Book* had reprinted Marjorie's 1931 story "A Plumb Clare Conscience" in its August 1933 issue. But the elephant in the room was not mentioned in this article: in fact, Marjorie and Charles were getting divorced. The paperwork became final less than two weeks after this front-page story in the *Key West Citizen*. Marjorie's "vacation" referred to was her trip to England in connection with her next novel, *Golden Apples* (1935), about an English "remittance man" on a Florida orange grove. Marjorie would tell an inquiring correspondent in 1943 that "I have a private affection for the least successful of my books, *Golden Apples*. It is not artistically successful, because I combined too-alien elements, yet I said things in it that I wanted very much to say."

It was front page news again—in her hometown newspaper, the *St. Augustine Record*—on June 29, 1949, when something happened for which all Rawlings scholars will be eternally grateful: —————→

FLORIDA AUTHOR'S MANUSCRIPTS GIVEN LIBRARY

GAINESVILLE, Fla., June 29 (P) — Original manuscripts of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' "The Yearling" and "Cross Creek," together with notes prepared for writing of the books, have been presented to the University of Florida library by the noted Florida author.

"The Yearling" was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1938. "Cross Creek" is a study of a section of Florida located only 18 miles from the university campus.

The presentation was made with the stipulation that the manuscripts be available to students of creative writing.

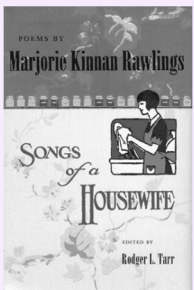


AND MORE RECENTLY:

Those who watched the three-part Ken Burns series on Ernest Hemingway may have noticed a familiar voice: the narrator was Peter Coyote, the actor who played Norton Baskin in the 1983 movie *Cross Creek*.

Norton had said for many years that if he was ever depicted in a film, he wanted to be played by Robert Redford. But he was delighted with the tall and handsome Coyote. To study for the part, the actor came to St. Augustine and followed Norton around – with a tape recorder. He later made the transcript available, and it was printed in the 1993 edition of the Society's *Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Journal of Florida Literature* (pp. 19-38).

Then, this year on August 8, the 125th birthday of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was noted by Garrison Keillor in his popular *Writer's Almanac*:



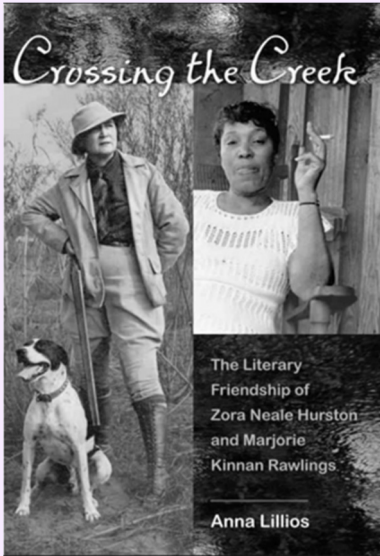
As a girl she loved to write, and she published stories and essays in the children's section of newspapers. As a young wife she moved to Rochester, New York, where she wrote for a society magazine. She suggested to the editor of the *Rochester Times-Union* that she write a daily column in verse, called "Songs of a Housewife." The editor was unconvinced but he finally agreed to let her try. Her column was extremely popular, syndicated in 50 newspapers. She wrote poems about cooking, being a mother, gardening, neighbors, housework, and the weather. Her first column was called "The Smell of Country Sausage," and it began: "I let the spiced aromas / Call up the kitchen stair / Before I have my table set / The family all is there." She wrote 495 columns of "Songs of a Housewife."

Keillor also touched on the later (and more significant) highlights of her career, and thus continued a long tradition he has of noting her annual birthday.

UPCOMING RAWLINGS BOOK TOUR:

Ann McCutchan, author of the book, *The Life She Wished to Live: A Biography of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Author of The Yearling* (W.W. Norton, 2021) will be visiting Florida on November 19-21 to speak and answer questions. On Friday, Nov 19, at 7 pm, McCutchan will be at the Matheson History Museum in Gainesville. On Saturday, Nov 20, at 2 pm, she will be in Cross Creek at the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park. On Sunday, Nov 21, at 2 pm, she will be speaking in the Lohman Auditorium at the Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience at Marineland in St. Augustine. Each event will be free and open to the public, and McCutchan's book will be for sale for \$35 at each venue.

Please keep an eye out for last minute updates and changes to this schedule, since we need to remain vigilant and flexible due to public health concerns. These events are sponsored by the Rothman Family Chair in the Humanities at the University of Florida, George A. Smathers Libraries, the Friends of the MKR Farm, Inc., The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society, and The South Anastasia Community Association. For more information, please contact Flo Turcotte at turcotte@ufl.edu or (352) 273-2767.



UPCOMING BOOK DISCUSSION:

As part of the celebration of the 200th anniversary of St. Johns County (which in 1821 covered fully half of Florida), the Public Library is having groups read *Crossing the Creek: The Literary Friendship of Zora Neale Hurston and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings*, a 2011 University of Florida Press book by our own Dr. Anna Lillios, longtime executive director of the Rawlings Society and current editor of our journal.

There will be a discussion of the book on Zoom on Wednesday, November 3, that members of the Society may want to participate in. To register, contact librarian Harold George via e-mail at hgeorge@sjcfl.us.

JODY RETURNS!

Claude Jarman will visit Cross Creek on Dec. 11, 2021. He will attend the 75th anniversary of *The Yearling's* film debut in 1946. His wife, Katie Jarman of Marin County, California, posted this in response to the *New York Times* review by Dwight Garner of Ann McCutchan's new MKR biography *The Life She Wished to Live*:

My husband, Claude Jarman Jr., was the star of the film, *The Yearling*. He was discovered by the movie's director, Clarence Brown in his 5th grade classroom in Nashville - one of 10,000 boys selected for the part of Jody. I believe he is one of the few, if any, living members of the cast. He will attend the 75th anniversary of *The Yearling* on Dec. 11, 2021 in Cross Creek near Silver Springs, Florida, where the movie was filmed. He writes about the difficulty of making the film and his 10 other films in his book, *My Life and the Final Days of Hollywood*, on Amazon. Follow him on his FB page—*My Life and The Final Days of Hollywood!* He has posted some interesting videos.

For more information see www.MarjorieKinnanRawlings.org



Claude and Katie Jarman

Along similar lines, our longtime, indefatigable trustee Margie Harris sent this reminder from *Reminisce* magazine. Other big films that debuted with *The Yearling* in 1946 included *The Big Sleep*; *It's a Wonderful Life*; *Song of the South*, and *The Best Years of Our Lives*, which won the Oscar for Best Picture. *Best Years* actor Frederic March had been a University of Wisconsin friend of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings—and they kept in touch ever afterwards.



NOTEWORTHY:

The Marjorie, the wonderful website that explores connections between and among the three Marjorie's—Marjorie Harris Carr, Marjory Stoneman Douglas and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, features a new piece “Searching for Granny’s Phlox,” by our former executive director, Leslie Kemp Poole:
<https://themarjorie.org/lessons-from-the-marjories>.



the
MARJORIE
Reclaim #FloridaWoman

You may remember that Anna Hamilton and Hannah Brown, co-founders and editors of *The Marjorie*, spoke at our Tarpon Springs 2019 conference.

MEET OUR MEMBERS:

Phil Jamieson of Mont Vernon, New Hampshire, writes how he came to know of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings:

I have followed a three-part path to the MKR Society. My father was a surgeon aboard aircraft carriers during World War II. The Navy had secured copies of *Cross Creek Cookery* to distribute to officers and sailors at sea during the War, for some reason. My father read it from cover to cover and fell in love with MKR's mango ice cream recipe. He was privileged to actually make some while in Hawaii, I believe. My family has loved the book for years, as well, and it is prominent in my MKR library here in Mont Vernon, NH. Of course, growing up in Cocoa, *The Yearling* was requisite reading. And the third route was via my uncle, who, while an architecture student at UF, was invited to join a professor as dinner guests at MKR's house. I joined the Society quickly after hearing about it and attending a meeting in Indian Harbor Beach or thereabouts several years ago.

Paul Williamson of St. Augustine, Florida, writes of his introduction to MKR's work:

In October 1979, early in my Floridays, my brother, who lives in DeLand, took me on an overnight canoe trip down the Ocklawaha River from Sharpe's Ferry to Eureka camping overnight at Gore's Landing. The trip introduced me to the other Florida. I was enchanted and could not stop saying so. My brother said, “you need to read *South Moon Under*.” I did and heard a voice that understood and accurately described what I had experienced. My Florida adventure continued as I traveled through all of Marjorie's work, listening and learning all the way.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Journal of Florida Literature seeks articles, creative fiction and poetry, book reviews, and notes in the spirit of or regarding the life and work of Rawlings, her circle, and other authors who use the state of Florida as a source of creativity. Please send submissions to the editor, Dr. Anna Lillios, at Anna@ucf.edu



IN MEMORIAM:

Hilda Collier Goff, at 95, was one of the senior members of the Rawlings Society when she passed away on December 20, 2020. For sixty of those years she had lived in Winter Park, but the early part of her life was spent in Ocala, near the scene of Marjorie Rawlings' books and stories. As a child she experienced the hardships of the Great Depression and the loss of a father, but like many a spirited youngster, she took delight in "growing up on 48 acres" and shared the tales of it with her descendants.

She graduated from Stetson University in DeLand in 1948, taught elementary school, married her love, Curtis Goff, and raised six children. They remember her "passion for being outdoors, constantly working on her gardens, bird watching, and caring for her beloved chickens." In these Covid times, a memorial service was held on June 20, 2021 and the family asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to Stetson University or to the Rawlings Society – for which we are grateful.

We regret the passing of music legend **Willie Green**, known as "the Real Deal," on June 14, 2021.

He grew up in a family of sharecroppers and migrant workers from Pine Level, Alabama, and had no birth certificate to prove his age, but he learned music back when Marjorie Rawlings was still alive, so he was definitely a senior citizen. (One newspaper estimated his age as 85.)

He had once been homeless and living under a bridge in Ocala, but in later life he rose to fame as a great blues musician. In 2010 he was awarded the Stetson Kennedy "Fellow Man, Mother Earth Award," and in 2017 he was honored with a Florida Folk Heritage Award. He is recognized at the Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee alongside two other great musicians: Ray Charles and B. B. King.

He was always a hit at St. Augustine's Lincolnville Festival, and locals fondly recall him jamming on the back porch of presidential candidate George McGovern (who spent his last years in the Ancient City).

His longest running gig was at Cross Creek's beloved Yearling Restaurant, where he began performing in 2002 and continued for 18 years until health problems and the Covid pandemic closed down his show in 2020.

He spent his last days at an assisted living facility in McIntosh, Florida – on the other side of Orange Lake from Cross Creek. His music will still be heard on CDs and memories of him will remain fresh for a long time to come.

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: www.rawlingssociety.org

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 today using the membership form below.

The person who registers the most **new** members wins a FREE Conference Registration for 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.

Membership Application for the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society

Name: _____	Student	\$15	Sponsor	\$100
	Individual	\$30	Patron	\$250
Address: _____	Family	\$40	Benefactor	\$500
	Sustaining	\$50	Life	\$1,000
City/State/Zip: _____	(Please circle membership level)			
E-mail address: _____	Mail to: Rawlings Society c/o Anne Pierce 249 Herman Drive Hawthorne, FL 32640			

To learn more about the society and information on the annual conference, visit our website, www.rawlingssociety.org