

News from the Creek

Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc.

Visit our website at: www.marjoriekinnanrawlings.org

Volume 23 Number 4

Fall Quarterly 2020

President's Message

by Barbara Wingo

Looking Forward

Looking Back



I hope that everyone is doing well in these unprecedented times.

I am happy to report that even with the challenges we face we successfully wished Marjorie a happy birthday this year with a virtual party. And the party included a wonderful present for all of us – Donna Green-Townsend's *Life & Times in Cross Creek: Memories & Reflections*.

The video was posted for Marjorie's birthday on our Facebook page and on our website. Further, the DVD of the presentation is selling briskly. Indeed, the DVD is well worth purchasing for the birthday presentation alone – but as a bonus it contains nineteen additional minutes of wonderful scenes of the Creek! Please see the information on how to order the DVD on page 5 of this newsletter. Hint: the holiday season is rapidly coming. What a wonderful gift the DVD would make! And nobody says you can't buy a gift for yourself. All the proceeds benefit the Friends and, hence, the park.

Speaking of board member Donna Green-Townsend, the second installment of an interview that her daughter conducted with J.T. Glisson is published in this issue of the newsletter. We certainly owe Donna many thanks for her many contributions.

Looking forward, in our fall newsletter we normally would be announcing the date, time and speaker for our annual meeting. I am happy to say that we are announcing all of these even though the meeting will be virtual. Please see the article on the annual meeting to be held December 5 on page 5 of this newsletter.

Another annual event is the holiday open house at Marjorie's home. As Scott notes in his message, the December 12th event will also be virtual. Check our website or Facebook page for information on both these events.

Scott also points out that the sign project that was mentioned in our last newsletter is nearly completed. We will hold an event featuring the dedication of the signs when the park fully reopens. The trail signs represent a wonderful combination of Marjorie's writings, Dr. Robert E. Carson's drawings, and the natural trail surroundings.

Now let us look backward for a moment. In the midst of composing *The Sojourner* at her house in Van Hornesville, New York, in 1950, Marjorie wrote to her husband Norton:

Leaving Wednesday, my Gracie said, "I suppose you want me to come tomorrow?" and I was staggered, wondering if in my absorption in my work and the consequent vagueness I had fired her, or if she had quit, as I was sure "tomorrow" wasn't going to be Sunday or even Saturday, when on occasion she joins her husband. I said, "What is tomorrow?" and she said "Thanksgiving," and I said of course not to bother to come. None of these holidays have much meaning any more, and I decided to forget all about it. I was amazed to find my heart leap with delight when Mrs. Three Feathers [Ruth Redjives, a neighbor] phoned, asking me to join them for Thanksgiving dinner. I accepted almost too avidly. (*The Private Marjorie: The Love Letters of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Norton S. Baskin*, p. 603.)

And, of course, Marjorie ate too much and thoroughly enjoyed herself.

We look forward to a time when events at the park may resume, and we can celebrate at in-person events. Until then, please take care. Also remember that your membership means even more in these unusual times, and we thank you for

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Park Manager Message
by Park Manager Scott Spaulding



Greetings Everyone:

Fall is here, and the year is slowly coming to an end. The recent sunsets reminded me of what Marjorie wrote in *Cross Creek*, chapter 20, about fall: "The sky is a glaring blue, too blue and cloudless, the red-birds no longer sing, the rank summer vegetation turns sere, and the sun goes down in a burning ball."

Golf Cart in action - Thanks to the Friends for our new golf cart and to volunteers Tom and Sue, our citrus is getting special attention this year. In addition to applying granular fertilizer, Tom and Sue have been applying a foliar spray of micro nutrients every two weeks. The trees are looking better and are full of fruit. Thanks to the Friends and Tom and Sue for making this happen!

Seeds for Sale - Special thanks to Friends member Marthalyne Ross with support from Park Ranger Geoffrey Gates, the Friends will now have seeds from the garden for sale. Marthalyne provided the artwork for the seed packets, which themselves are one of a kind. We hope this venture will give our guests another keepsake from the Farm and provide some income for the Friends. More to come about this project later.

Chicken Update - In the spring newsletter we spoke about our new

game hen chicks that the Friends purchased for the farm...well they are all grown and are doing well. The game hens are very sociable, but at the same time are very alert and can take flight, which is a good combination of traits for the Farm. The next time you come out, look for the game hens: they love to hide in the bushes where they search for bugs.



Holiday Open House - Although we are saddened that we will not be holding a Holiday Open House this year, we are excited that we will be conducting a virtual tour of the house and grove in All of its Christmas Splendor. Be sure to follow the Friends Facebook Page and website for more information on this upcoming event to premier on December 12, 2020.

Tour Update - I know that everyone is eager to get back in the house for a guided tour, and we are just as eager ourselves. For safety's sake, however, we will continue to provide information outside the house and provide outside tours with small groups upon request.

Marjorie's Quotation Trail Sign Project - Imagine walking one of the remote trails in the park enjoying the peace, quiet and scenery. Imagine what Marjorie herself would have said at that special moment when you are surrounded by the solitude of nature...well imagine no more. Thanks to the Friends' funding the project, we will be placing 10 signs along our trail, each with a quotation from Marjorie's books and each with a different drawing by the late Robert Carson. The signs will be placed along the trail away from the farmstead, and our hope is that Marjorie's own words will inspire visitors to read her wonderful books for the first time or again. We plan on having a ribbon cutting celebration when the signs are in place so be on the look out for that invitation, most likely early next year. See page 6 for two examples of these signs.

Until next time, we wish you all well. Have a wonderful holiday season!

Reflections: An Interview with J. T. Glisson (Part 2)

Edited with an Introduction by Donna Green-Townsend, Friends of the MKR Farm Board Member

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings wrote about many of her Cross Creek neighbors in her book, *Cross Creek*, including the Glisson family. She was very close to Tom Glisson and his son, J. T. Rawlings inspired J. T. to become not only a great writer, but also a wonderful artist. J. T. died on April 25th of 2019. When my daughter Jessie (Townsend) Armstrong was in middle school at P. K. Yonge in Gainesville, she decided to interview J. T. for a school project. Here's part two of that interview:

Jessie: Is it true that the crippled character Fodder Wing or Jody in her book *The Yearling* was based on you?

J.T. Glisson: No. Like all things I never know short answers for anything. But when I was in high school I wasn't making very good grades. My academic average was terrible. I was interested in drawing and arts and so forth and I was about to flunk out in my senior year. And I wanted to get into the Air Corps at that time.

I was desperate to make up a grade average that was terrible. But fortunately we had a teacher who had come from somewhere out of the country and was enamored by Ms. Rawlings and her work, and I thought of it one day. She kept bringing up and talking about Ms. Rawlings and I thought about it one day, and I said to her, I said, "Mrs. Green, if Mrs. Rawlings came and gave us a speech, would I pass English and social science?" And she said, oh she thought it would be absolutely wonderful. It would be worth the entire year. I thought hallelujah I am going to graduate. I'm going to be out of high school.

So that afternoon I went down to get Ms. Rawlings to come. It was real funny. When I was on my way there I began to think about that. I had to get her to do it because I just was desperate that she do it. So I, uh, by the time I got there, for the first time in my life I'm thinking of the things, hey this was more than just this nice lady next door now. She had won the Pulitzer Award. They were making the film *The Yearling*, at that time in Hollywood, and all of her distinguished friends. I also knew that she had been given honorary doctorate degrees from her university, her alma mater in Wisconsin, and also from Stetson and U of F, the University of Florida. And by the time I got there it had gotten so big I was afraid she would say no.

And I called. Down here you don't knock on doors. You come to the door and say hello, you know. This gives them a chance to decide if they want to be at home or whether they want to greet you or have you come in. Also, if they have a bad dog you can get out of the yard quick. So I said, I yelled, "Hey Ms. Rawlings." And she said, "What is it. What do you want?" and she said, "Come on in," because normally I just came on in. And I said, "No ma'am would you come out here." She said, "Come on in." And I said, "No ma'am would you come to the door." And she came to the door and said, "What on earth are you standing out in the yard for?" And I just blurted it out. I said, "Ms. Rawlings, my teacher said I'll pass social science and English if you'll come to Hawthorne and give us a talk." And she got a look on her face and I thought, "Uh-oh, she's going to blow up." And I turned towards the gate and she laughed loud enough we could have heard her across the lake. She said, "That has to be the damndest invitation I've ever had in my life." And I was almost to the gate and she said, "Well wait, when?" And I didn't take a chance. I said, "Tomorrow at one o'clock." So she said, "I'll be there."

So the next day when I told the teacher, the teacher said we have to tell the principal. And the principal was a little upset that it was such short notice, but he decided that in that it was Mrs. Rawlings that it would be worth it for the entire student body. There were some 300 children in school at Hawthorne then, in the elementary and high school. So he allowed me to go out and meet her and bring her in and introduce her, which got me out of a class. And so when she came in uh, he, uh, I did one of those introductions like kids do that hates to do introductions. I said, "Mr. Benson, Ms. Rawlings. Ms. Rawlings, Mr. Benson." She reached out and shook his hand and when he went to take his hand back she didn't turn him loose. He said, "Is there something the matter?" And she said, "Yes." She said, "I want to be sure we understand our deal." He said, "What



J. T. with his parents Mr. and Mrs. Tom Glisson

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

deal.” And I thought, “Uh-oh.” Bless her heart, Mrs. Green, the teacher said, “I promised that J. T. will pass English and social sciences if Mrs. Rawlings gives us a speech.” So the principal, she was still holding his hand and wouldn’t turn him loose, and he said, “Under the circumstances I will go along with it, but it’s not my idea of education.”

So we all went into the auditorium. On the way in when she first got there, before we went in I told her, “You don’t have to talk long. Just a little bit and I’ll pass.” It never occurred to me that it would be interesting and that I would enjoy it. But we went into the auditorium and she, first of all, she refused to sit on the stage. She said, “I came to talk to the students here, and I would prefer to be down here in the aisles.” She also shocked the teacher and principal quite a bit because then she looked at him and said, “You don’t mind if I smoke?” And she took out her pack of Camels, and he had that look like, “Lady, you’re running the show. Do whatever you please.” So she lit a cigarette. Then she told the children though, she said, I love to tell this because it’s so like her, she said, “I hate speeches, always been frightened of speeches.” She said, “What I really wanted to do was to talk to you. So why don’t we just have a conversation. You ask me questions and I’ll answer them and maybe I’ll ask you some questions.”



J. T. (l) and Berney Lee Bass ®, holding a bobcat

So I think the first question that a kid asked was: “Why did your husband leave you?” She answered it thoroughly and to the point without any...just straight through as if it was “what kind of bread do you like?” And they asked her all sorts of questions. They asked her about the movie being made. They asked her how much money she got for the book *The Yearling*, and so forth and she gave them exact answers. She was that way always. She never hedged on anything. Then naturally the kids loved to kid me about it. So somebody said, “Was J. T. Fodder Wing? Was he the model for Fodder Wing or Jody in *The Yearling*?” They liked the Fodder Wing part best because he was “tetched” in the head. She said, “No, as a writer, writers are very jealous of the characters they create.” And she said, “I like to think that I totally created the characters.” She said, “At the same time I would have to say that I did know J. T. growing up as a local boy and so forth and possibly there is some things there, little things that I might have picked up here and there, but I like to, I’m rather jealous that I created those characters.” Later she told me, “Don’t ever allow yourself to become attached to a fictional character.” She said, “Be yourself.” And she said it would be really a bad thing and she said, “Really what I said was true.”

It was real funny after this thing. She talked, can you imagine now, third grade through seniors in high school in the auditorium from right after lunch all the way to the end of the school day which included what was normally the activity period when everybody could go out on the school ground. We didn’t have athletic equipment then, but the girls could all gossip and the boys could all fight or whatever they wanted. But when the bell rang for that, the kids all went “no, no” like we don’t want to leave. She didn’t know why the bell rang so she just went on too. They actually ended up holding up the school buses that afternoon for a few minutes because of her running overtime of the whole afternoon plus the activity period. I was so proud of her. She had done good. I decided I would ride home with her. So we went out with her and got in the car. And the minute we got in the car she reached around and she slapped me on the shoulder and she said, “We did it J. T. We did it didn’t we?” and I said, “Yes ma’am we did.” And that’s why I’m not still in high school I think.



(l to r) Dorsey Townsend, Sr., Dorsey Townsend, III, J. T. Glisson and “Snow” Slater taken around 1995



Like us on Facebook at The Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm. Our Facebook page shares photos, videos and events related to the Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm.

Ron Haase at the Friends Annual Meeting



The Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm are pleased to present Ron Haase as our featured speaker at our annual meeting, which will be held on Saturday, December 5, at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Our members should need no introduction to Ron Haase. The artwork that graces the Friends' newsletter and stationery is his, and his book *Classic Cracker* is on many of our bookshelves. When asked to provide a brief biographical sketch, Mr. Haase presented the following, which (very modestly, indeed) sets forth his background:

- * Ron Haase taught architecture for twenty years at the University of Florida.
- * In his book *Classic Cracker* he tells us that before leaving Franconia, New Hampshire for Gainesville, Florida in 1977 he asked his two youngest children to read Marjorie Rawlings' *The Yearling* with him.
- * "I hoped that the kids would identify with Jody ... and be eager to explore the North Florida backwoods and wetlands."
- * Haase's book draws heavily on Rawlings, starting each chapter with a quote from one of her many writings where he found insight into the Cracker lives and culture that guided his own research and writing.
- * His second book *The Last House* returns to explore further these Cracker roots and brings along the ghost of Marjorie Rawlings to help make the argument.
- * Ron Haase and his wife Janet are both artists—she a tapestry weaver and he a painter. Much of their art continues to draw on Florida's vernacular imagery.

His talk will be entitled "Marjorie and Me" and will feature a video of area architecture and the park. There will be an opportunity to ask questions. Further details on how to access the meeting will be sent to members. See you (virtually) soon!

LIFETIME MEMBERS

- Ginny and Gunter Arndt
- Danny and Judy Baker
- Sheila Barnes
- Catherine Beazley
- Diane E. Beck
- Roger and Linda Blackburn
- Sybil Ann Brennan
- Mary W. Bridgman
- Arden Brugger
- Dan Cantliffe
- Ginger Carter
- Norma Davis
- Patricia Ann Davis
- Sheila Dickison
- John and Balinda Ferree
- Sue Gaintner
- Ordy Greenly
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- Brenda Keith
- Mary J. Kelly
- Shirley Kiser
- Richard Knellinger, P.A.
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- Shirley Lucas
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- Colleen, Frank and Lana Mahoney
- Janet Matthews
- Ruth Maughan
- Judith McFadden and Ilene Nathanson
- Mary Lisa McLaughran
- Robert D. McReynolds
- Eleanor Merritt
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- James R. Nici
- Rebecca Nullier
- Alan Palmer
- Spence Perry
- Marsha Dean Phelts
- John Henry & Margaret Anne Pierce
- Liz Pooley
- A.L. Rhinehart
- Art & Edda Ross
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- Angela Territo
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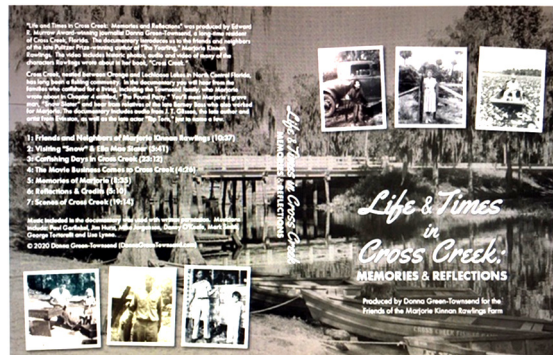
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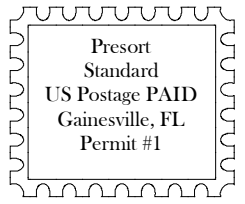
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Life and Times in Cross Creek: Memories and Reflections

A DVD of **Life and Times in Cross Creek: Memories and Reflections** produced by Donna Green-Townsend for the Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm is now available. This hour-long special program premiered on the Friends website and Facebook page on August 8th for Marjorie's Birthday. The program features unique historic video, audio and photos of friends and neighbors of Rawlings, including J.T. Glisson, "Snow" and Ella Mae Slater, Berney Bass and the late actor Rip Torn to name a few. The DVD includes this special program with a bonus of nineteen minutes featuring Cross Creek scenes.

The DVD is available to purchase for \$15.00 plus \$4.00 for postage and handling. All proceeds will benefit projects on the Rawlings Farm. Please make your check payable to Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm and mail to PO Box 337, Micanopy, FL 32667-0337.





Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc.
 P.O. Box 337
 Micanopy, FL 32667-0337

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!

Be sure to visit us at marjoriekinnanrawlings.org Or floridastateparks.org/marjoriekinnanrawlings

It is impossible to be among the wood's animals on their own ground without a feeling of expanding one's own world, as when any foreign country is visited.

Cross Creek, 1942

Food imaginatively and lovingly prepared, and eaten in good company, warms the being with something more than the mere intake of calories. I cannot conceive of cooking for friends or family, under reasonable conditions, as being a chore.

Cross Creek Cookery, 1942

<i>Membership Information</i>					
Effective July 1, 2014 new membership dues are as follows					
Type	1yr	3yr	5yr	10yr	Lifetime
Individual	\$25	\$70	\$105	\$200	\$ 450
Family	\$30	\$85	\$130	\$250	\$ 550
Educational	\$30	\$85	\$130	\$250	\$ 550
Corporate	\$55	\$155	\$255	\$500	\$1,000

Please circle type of membership and send with your check to:
Friends of the MKRawlings Farm, Inc.
P.O. Box 337
Micanopy, FL 32667-0337

Membership in the Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc.

We invite you to join or renew your membership in the Citizen Support Organization (CSO) for the MKR Historic State Park. Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc., is a 501©(3) nonprofit organization. All contributions are tax deductible. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Florida Division of Consumer Services by calling 1-800-435-7352 (toll-free within Florida). Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the State.

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