



News from the Creek

Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc.

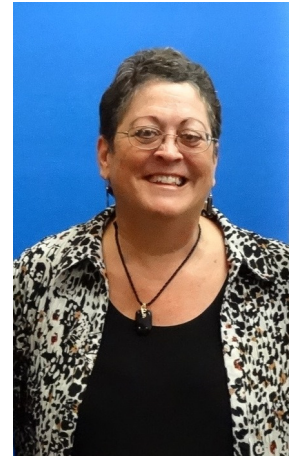
Volume 26 Number 1

Visit our website at: www.marjoriekinnanrawlings.org

Winter Quarterly 2023

President's Message

By Donna Green-Townsend



Happy New Year greetings from Cross Creek! This is my first official newsletter as the elected President of the Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc. As such I will take just a minute to tell you something about myself. 2023 begins my seventh year on the Board, but my 38th year living in Cross Creek. I am a journalist by profession and moved to Florida from Missouri to work at the public radio station, WUFT-FM at the University of Florida. It was there that I met artist Kate Barnes from Cross Creek who also worked at the radio station. It was Kate (*one of our lifetime members of the Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm*) who suggested I do a feature story about a proposed development for Cross Creek which would have changed the community forever. To make a long story short, through the interviews for that story and seeing Cross Creek and the two lakes, Orange and Lochloosa by boat I just fell in love with the area and moved here in 1984.

Not long after moving to “the Creek” I married into the Townsend family, one of the families Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings wrote about in one of her most popular books, *Cross Creek* in 1942 (*see Chapter 4: The Pound Party*). Through the years I have heard about many colorful stories involving Marjorie and her Cross Creek neighbors. I hope to continue to share some of those stories in the months to come as many of the descendants of the families Marjorie wrote about still live here. Let me start with a story I love, especially since we just celebrated Christmas and the holidays recently.

Marjorie was truly a beloved neighbor in “the Creek.” Every year she packed her Oldsmobile with Christmas boxes for the families. The boxes were filled with goodies for the children and adults alike.

In *The Private Marjorie, The Love Letters of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings to Norton S. Baskin* (published by University Press of Florida) Marjorie wrote a letter dated December 23rd, 1943. “...Must get my Christmas boxes together. Mrs. Townsend sent over a note this morning, as she did years ago, saying that Jesse and Thelma hoped I would bring Santa Claus.”

My brothers-in-law, Ray and the late Bobby Townsend, sons of Leila and Samuel Townsend’s older son Dorsey Lee Townsend, Sr., recalled those special Christmas deliveries in the 1940s.



Jesse and Thelma, the youngest of eleven children born to Leila and Samuel Townsend.

“I can remember sitting out in the front when it started getting close to Christmas and we knowed she’d be comin’ and listen for her car,” said Bobby. “She had her ‘ole Oldsmobile and you could just hear it comin’ down the road. There’d always be a carton of cigarettes on top of the box. She never forgot what each man of the house smoked. Back then daddy smoked them little Camels . . . We’d be just out in the front yard, usually baitin’ and rackin’ (catfish) lines or something and just listening for what might be her car comin’ down through the woods usually two or three days right before Christmas. ..She’d always remember the families.”



Dorsey & Marietta Townsend with young sons Bobby and Ray

(Continued on page 3)

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers 2023

President:
Donna Green-Townsend
Vice President: Scott Spaulding
Secretary: Kathleen Pagan
Treasurer: Anne Pierce

CSO Board of Directors

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Kathlyne Walkup Sheppard
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Elisabeth Williamson
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Resource Advisory Members

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Murray Laurie
Michaelyn Luttge
Elaine Carson Spencer
Jim Stephens

Manager's Message
by Ginger Nichols



Happy New Year to all of you! We are so appreciative of your support and look forward to another productive year here at the farm.

Since our last newsletter the new cedar shake roof on Marjorie's farmhouse has been completed and it is beautiful. We are so happy for the project to be done. Peace and quiet has returned to the farm.

Everyone enjoyed the Cracker Architecture presentation by Ron Haase at the annual meeting in December. It was well attended and very interesting.

The annual Christmas open house was a hit and we welcomed visitors from near and far who enjoyed the lovely evening by firelight. The music and caroling were beautiful and cookies and cider enjoyed by all. Thank you to all who volunteered that evening as we would not have pulled off the event without you!

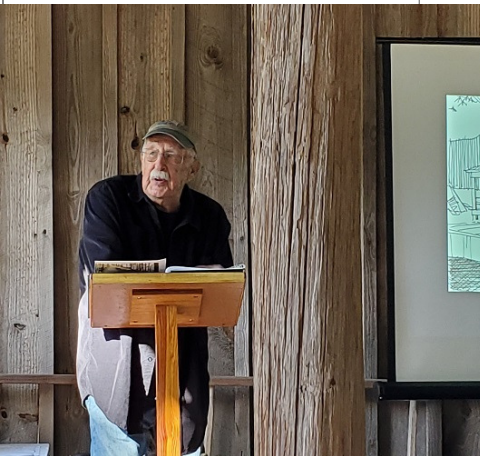
Marjorie wrote in *Cross Creek*; "Our periods of cold last for three days at the most, then mildness follows, and even during the bad times the days themselves are bright and sunny. My only concern through the winter is for my young grove." We have recently experienced temperatures in the teens and are now warming up again. It has taken a toll on the vegetation in the garden and grove, but we are hopeful and will be diligent to assist with recovery.

We welcome new resident volunteers Robert and Sonya Childs. They are super enthusiastic and experienced Florida State Park volunteers. We look forward to accomplishing much with their assistance over the next 4 months.

Volunteers are always welcome and very much needed here at MKR. If you know anyone that might enjoy helping, please ask that they give me a call at 352-466-9273. I will be happy to show them around and help them discover how they could assist the park with their talents. We ask for a minimum commitment of just 4 hours a week if possible, for local volunteers and 20 hours per week for resident volunteers.

Take care and we will hope to see you around the creek soon!

Ginger



Ron Haase giving a presentation about Cracker Architecture in December.



Park staff and volunteers lit up the path through Marjorie's orange grove for the holiday event



Roofers replacing the cedar shake shingles on Marjorie's house

(Continued from page 1)



(l to r) Ray and Bobby Townsend in the late 1940s to early 1950s

“I do remember her coming down. I remember the box of goodies with the ham and candy and some candy canes and things like that...cigarettes for daddy and chewing tobacco for daddy,” said Ray.

December and January are also traditional citrus-picking months around Cross Creek. The hard freezes in the last days of December took a toll on citrus in Marjorie’s grove this past year, not unlike many years when she had to fire up the grove to save her fruit. Even during good crop years Marjorie often hated to pick the fruit from the trees she had tenderly tended all year.

In her book *Cross Creek* she wrote, “I invariably put off all the orange picking as long as possible. I have watched the fruit for so long, from the first blossoms in February, through the summer growth of the hard green balls, through the sudden swelling on the fall rains, and, with cool nights, the bright color showing. The oranges hang like lighted lanterns through the winter. I use the excuse of waiting for a better market, but I delay in fact only because I cannot bear to see them cut and the globes of light extinguished. Several times I have lost the entire crop in a freeze through my dilatory fondness.”



The Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm organization hopes you have a wonderful 2023. We look forward to seeing you at the farm this year. Check out our calendar of events in this newsletter.

Note: Thanks to documentarian Sonya Doctorian for her quotes from Bobby Townsend.



Front Entrance Improvements

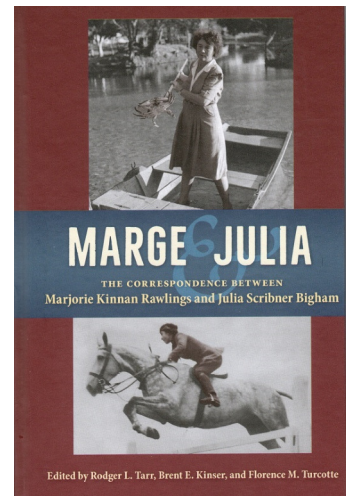
Improvements to the entrance kiosk were recently completed. Special thanks to Park Volunteer Stephen Cotton and Board Vice President Scott Spaulding for making the improvements which included wooden shingles along with board and batten siding to resemble Marjorie's farmhouse. The new interpretive panel was designed to engage visitors and spark their interest in learning more about the fascinating life and times of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. This project was partially and generously funded by the family of F. James Helms to whom we are very thankful.

Marge and Julia

We're delighted to announce the publication of *Marge and Julia: the Correspondence of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Julia Scribner Bigham*. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Rawlings was first introduced to Julia Scribner (later Bigham), daughter of publishing magnate Charles Scribner III, shortly after the legendary Scribner House published *The Yearling* to great success in 1938. Though Julia's New York City life was far removed from the rural world of Cross Creek, the two women remained close until Rawlings's death in 1953, after which Scribner Bigham served as Rawlings's literary executor. In this documentary edition of 211 of their letters, Rawlings's and Bigham's perspectives on the world are woven through over a decade of intimate discussion and advice about relationships, motherhood, mental health, politics, art, and literature.

The correspondence in this volume encompasses all of the extant letters between them from 1939 when they met, and 1953 when Rawlings died. This 530-page book is available on the University Press of Florida website. <https://upf.com/book.asp?id=9780813069289>. Friends of the MKR Farm members can receive a 40% discount by using the code "MKR40" when placing an order. The book is partially based on a gift of letters to Julia from MKR that arrived at Smathers Library in December 2018. Pairing them up with Julia's letters to Marjorie already in the archive created an epistolary conversation that we found exciting and fascinating. Rodger Tarr, Brent Kinser and I organized and transcribed them and wrote extensive notes contextualizing references in the letters. We're certain you will enjoy this intimate glimpse into the lives of these two women.

Florence M. Turcotte
Literary Manuscripts Archivist
University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries



A Musical Tribute to Cross Creek

By Anne Pierce

The Gainesville Orchestra concert given Friday, October 21, at 7:30 p.m., at the Jackson N. Sasser Fine Arts Hall at Santa Fe College in Gainesville featured, in addition to other works, the world premiere of a suite prepared by Deniz Cordell from Leonard Rosenman's Academy Award-nominated score for the motion picture *Cross Creek*. The suite performance included narration from the writings of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings performed by Nell Page Rainsberger.

The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park and the Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm were graciously invited to have an information table in the lobby before, during and after the performance. Ranger Geoffrey Gates, Flo Turcotte and Anne Pierce, represented the Park and the Friends. There was a quite a bit of interest in Rawlings' work as well as Park visits and tours. In addition to meeting the Musical Director, Evans Haile, and Mr. Cordell, there were conversations with attendees. Newsletters, Park brochures and information about the Friends and the Park were shared. Rawlings' books *Cross Creek* and *The Yearling* and *Cross Creek Reader's Guide* were available for purchase.

This sold-out performance was a special, beautiful way of sharing what is the magic of Rawlings' work and her Cross Creek farm with the community. By the way, the Friends picked up several new members as a result of this outreach.





February 12th Three writers give talks at the Farm



August 6th Celebrating Marjorie's birthday

Photo Highlights from Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm Events in 2022



April 2nd Award-winning author Jack E. Davis gives a Writer's Talk



November 12th, Award-winning author Cynthia Barnett gives a Writer's Talk



December 10th Holiday Celebration at the Farm



April 6th Sally Baskin Hooker and her husband Jim visit the farm. Sally is the niece of Norton Baskin and MKR

Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc. Fiscal Year 2022

Summary Report

Anne Pierce, Treasurer

Income Sources:

Contributions	\$15,859
Sales	\$ 6,535 (books, DVDs, note cards, seeds)
Special Event	\$ 2,975 (Jarman 2021 events)
CD Interest	\$ 809

Expenses

Web site	\$ 1,872
Park Programs	\$ 1,342
Direct Park	\$ 8,528 (water, freezer, fertilizer, garden plants, fans, kiosk, etc.)
Newsletter	\$ 1,809
Mgt & Gen.	\$ 763 (PO Box, checks, FL Parks membership, etc.)
Liability Insur.	\$ 2018

Thank you for your support with your membership, generous donations, and purchases of materials from the Friends. As you see, our major objective is to support the mission of the MKR Historic State Park through programming and working with the Staff to meet the ongoing needs of the Park.

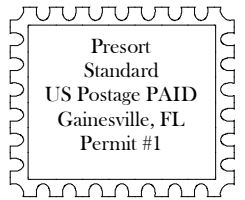
As we head into 2023, the Board of Directors is working to continue the Friends' commitment to the MKR Historic State Park. We hope that you will come to the Cross Creek Farm to programs and special events this year as well as consider volunteering at the Park and/or donating to the Friends.

LIFETIME MEMBERS

- Ginny and Gunter Arndt
- Judy Baker
- Kate Barnes
- Sheila Barnes
- Catherine Beazley
- Diane E. Beck
- Roger and Linda Blackburn
- Robert Blauer
- Sybil Ann Brennan
- Mary W. Bridgman
- Arden Brugger
- Dan Cantliffe
- Ginger and Kevin Carter
- Norma Davis
- Patricia Ann Davis
- Sheila Dickison
- Barbara E. Dupont
- John and Balinda Ferree
- Sue Gaintner
- Ordy Greenly
- Ronald Haase
- Robert E. Haines
- J. C. Harrell
- Judith Harris
- Candace Henderson
- Mrs. Nathan V. Hendricks, III
- Sheila Holloway
- John and Phyllis Holmgren
- Roy Hunt
- Claude and Katie Jarman
- Deanne Clark & William H. Jeter, Jr.
- Ashley Jordan
- Brenda Keith
- Mary J. Kelly
- Shirley Kiser
- Richard Knellinger, P.A.
- Angel Kwolek-Folland
- Murray Laurie
- Shirley Lucas
- Michaelyn Luttge
- Colleen, Frank and Lana Mahoney
- Janet Matthews
- Ruth Maughan
- Judith McFadden
- Mary Lisa McGaughan
- Robert D. McReynolds
- Eleanor Merritt
- Elinor N. Midgette
- W.L. Miller
- James R. Nici
- Rebecca Nullier
- Spence Perry
- Marsha Dean Phelts
- Margaret Anne Pierce
- Liz Pooley
- A.L. Rhinehart
- Art & Edda Ross
- Tom and Luisa Sheer
- Martha Steward
- Angela Territo
- Shirley Thompson
- M. List Underwood, Jr.
- Pamela Lydick Whiting
- Colleen Whitlock
- Barbara Wingo

CORPORATE MEMBERS

- Blackadder Brewers (Life)
- Blue Highway Pizzeria
- Dancing Cows Ranch
- Mobley Pharmacy Services of Gainesville



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.
 Visit www.marjoriekinnanrawlings.org to join or renew or you may fill out and send a check with the form below.
 If your membership is current, we thank you!

Mark Your Calendar!

(updated regularly, please check website www.marjoriekinnanrawlings.org)

Saturday, February 18th	1:30pm	Writer's Talk at the Park Author: Charlie Hailey presents The Porch—Meditations on the Edge of Nature
Saturday, August 5th	11am—1pm	Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Birthday Celebration
Saturday, December 2nd	2pm	Annual Meeting of the Friends of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc.
Saturday, December 9th	TBA	Annual Holiday Event at The Farm



All events will be held at the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park unless otherwise noted

Membership Information

Effective September 1, 2021 new membership dues are as follows

Type	1yr	3yr	5yr	10yr	Lifetime
Individual	\$30	\$85	\$140	\$270	\$ 500
Family	\$35	\$100	\$165	\$320	\$ 600
Educational	\$35	\$100	\$165	\$320	\$ 600
Corporate	\$60	\$175	\$290	\$570	\$1,000

Effective 9/1/2021

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

or visit our website at marjoriekinnanrawlings.org
 to join or renew your membership online

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 Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park. Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc., is a 501(c)(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.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Comments:

Please Note: Our dues structure was updated September 2021