



News from the Creek

Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc.

Visit our website at: www.marjoriekinnanrawlings.org

Summer Quarterly 2021

Volume 24 Number 3

President's Message

by Barbara Wingo

Looking Forward

Looking Back



Summer is upon us. As Rawlings observed in *Cross Creek*:

Folk who have never known a tropical summer have never luxuriated in indolence, while the world around them burst out of its sheath in a mad exuberance of growth. It is at the Creek as though Nature said to us, "You have toiled for me, now rest quietly in the shade, and the sun and rain and I will do all that is needed."

But there is no indolence at the park as this is the time of year that cleaning and restoration is done. And it is the time of year when we celebrate Rawlings' birthday.

We are so happy to be able to let you know that this year's celebration will again be live! Please join us at the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park on Saturday, August 7, at 10 a.m. to celebrate. We will begin our program with a dedication of the trail signs that we have talked so much about in our recent newsletters. Recognitions and awards will follow. Refreshments will be cupcakes with mango ice cream from *Cross Creek Cookery*. As we eat, we can watch Donna Green-Townsend's Zoom interview with Claude Jarman, Jr., a preview of our exciting events in December.

The birthday festivities don't end there: on Sunday, August 8 (Marjorie's actual 125th birthday), WUFT-TV will show Donna Green-Townsend's video, *Life and Times in Cross Creek: Memories and Reflections*.

The coming events in December refer to our commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the premiere of the motion picture *The Yearling* with our special guest, Claude Jarman, Jr., who played Jody. And speaking of summer, Claude had this to say about the Florida summer in his autobiography:

Once May arrived, the Florida heat became unrelenting - the kind of steaming humidity that takes your breath away and saps the strength from your bones. In early July, the rains came and stayed, Buckets of rain would fall for days, drawing swarms of mosquitos by the thousands. We would sit in the trailer or under a tree, swat the bugs away, and watch the sky for a break in the clouds, then scramble to get a scene in.

I hope that this description of summer in Florida does not keep you away from Marjorie's Birthday Party on August 7! At the same time hearing Jarman's reminiscences should give you an incentive to save the dates of December 11 and December 12! Among the activities planned are a showing of *The Yearling* and a live talk-back with Claude Jarman, Jr., at the historic Marion Theatre in Ocala. More details on the events to be held at that time and how to buy tickets will be included in our Fall newsletter, on our website, and on our Facebook page.

Another Save the Date is November 20 for the Friends' Annual Meeting. The Meeting will be held at the park at 1:00 p.m. In addition to our annual business, we will briefly commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park. At 2:00 a Writer's Talk with Ann McCutchan, author of the recently published *The Life She*

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Park Manager’s Message
by Park Manager Scott Spaulding



Greetings Everyone:

Marjorie describes summer in detail in her book *Cross Creek*. One passage I love is about the birdbath that still sits in the front of the house near the gate. As she wrote in Chapter 19 – Summer: *We have little advance news of summer. One day it is spring, with the air cool and the buds still opening. The next, it is summer, and the sun is very close to the earth, and the red-birds lift their wings and open their bills to cool themselves. They seem to discover newly the bird-bath and instead of taking a casual wetting, splash themselves all over for minutes at a time. They are angry when the water has not been changed and is too warm, and fly back and forth across the yard, scolding human thoughtlessness. When fresh cool water is put in the bath, the word goes out, and a dozen are there, scattering the water for yards around.* It seems that the red-birds haven’t changed much in behavior since Marjorie wrote that chapter.

We recently received 14 young orange trees and will be planting them where the former trees once grew. As Marjorie discovered, work in the grove is unending. Although we don’t maintain the grove for profit, which was one reason she moved to Cross Creek, we do maintain it for the other reason she moved here: the sights, sounds and smells of the grove that make up the landscape. Marjorie loved the look of fruit on the trees and would often leave fruit on the yard trees months after the main grove was harvested. Funding for the re-stocking was made possible through a grant from the Florida State Parks Foundation. Thank You Foundation!

Work is well underway re-building the entrance kiosk that was funded by a generous donor. The work is being completed by Resident Volunteer Stephen Cotton, who makes it look easy, which for him it is. We look forward to this much needed improvement.

In August we look forward to hosting Marjorie’s 125th Birthday Celebration. During this special event we will also be commemorating the parks 50th plus 1 Anniversary. Florida Park Service Director Eric Draper will be joining us, and we hope you can too.

A much-deserved Congratulations goes out to board member Donna Green-Townsend, chosen as the Florida Park Service, District 2 Volunteer of the Month for June. Thank you for All You Do, Donna!

As a reminder, in August we close the farmhouse for two months while our annual archival cleaning is performed. Everything will be gently cleaned and assessed from top to bottom in preparation for the “grand” re-opening in October when house tours will resume.

Now comes the bittersweet part of my final newsletter. As many of you know, I will be retiring the end of August. 35 years, where has the time gone? Starting out as an eager young Park Ranger and now as an older and slightly slower version of myself, I look back and it seems like but a blur. But looking deeper into the blur I can recall countless memories, enough to fill many pages if not many books. Memories of trials and tribulations, of successes and failures, of happiness and despair, of accomplishments and wasted effort, of smiles and frowns, of blood, sweat and sometimes tears. Looking back at my 35-year career, I am more grateful for the acquaintances than the accomplishments and will always treasure my final three years at Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park.

Farewell my Friends, and Thanks for the Memories.



Marjorie’s 125th Birthday Celebration

Saturday, August 7, at 10 a.m.

Marjorie’s 125th Birthday Celebration will be held Saturday, August 7, at 10 a.m., at the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park.

The event will begin with the dedication of the trail markers that present quotations from Marjorie’s works with illustrations by Robert E. Carson from Gordon Bigelow’s *Frontier Eden*. Cupcakes and mango ice cream will be served. A video interview with Claude Jarman, Jr., will also be shown.

Please come to the birthday party at the park and then continue with your celebration by watching *Cross Creek: Memories and Reflections* at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 8, on WUFT-TV.

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Wished to Live: A Biography of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Author of The Yearling will be held. Ms. McCutchan will also appear at events at the Matheson History Museum in Gainesville on November 19 and in St. Augustine on November 21. Details will appear in our next newsletter as well as on our website and on our Facebook page.

Our volunteer spotlight article in this newsletter is a special one as it recognizes Volunteer of the Month for District 2 of the Florida Park Service, Donna Green-Townsend. Readers of this and earlier newsletters need no introduction to her exemplary work for the Friends.

And some sad news: our Park Manager Scott Spaulding will be retiring in August. He will be sorely missed, to say the least. Another reason to attend the birthday party on August 7 will be to say good-bye to Scott and wish him well in his future endeavors.

See you at the birthday party and all our coming events. As always, please stay safe and stay well.



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.

Volunteer Spotlight—Donna Green-Townsend

Congratulations to Donna Green-Townsend who was named the June Volunteer of the Month for Florida Park Service District 2. This is an honor more than well deserved.

Donna Green-Townsend joined the board of the Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc. in April of 2017. She is a journalist with over 40 years of radio and television experience. She has done invaluable work for the Friends in providing professional video records of many of our events. These include: “Hotel Thomas Porch Party, September 16, 2017”; “Highlights of the Year of *Cross Creek* and *Cross Creek Cookery*” (75th Anniversary); “Carol Fiddia Laxton Tours Home of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings”; “Carol Fiddia Laxton Shares Memories of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings”; “James M. Stephens Fodderwing Critter Exhibit at the Yearling Restaurant”; “The Pound Party presented by James M. Stephens at the Farm”; “Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings’ 123rd Birthday Celebration”; and “Marjorie’s Antiochers” (Antioch Cemetery tour). She and Elaine Spencer have also shared their video production “The Artistic Ties between Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Robert E. Carson” with us.



Donna’s accomplishments during the pandemic have been especially noteworthy. At the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park we have had a “birthday party” for Rawlings each year. In 2020 we could not have that birthday party in person, but Donna came to the rescue. In December of 2019 Donna, a longtime Cross Creek resident, had given a presentation at the Friends’ Annual Meeting on Cross Creek. Donna expanded, honed and transformed that material into a video presentation for the Rawlings’ birthday celebration. This hour-long program entitled *Life and Times in Cross Creek: Memories and Reflections* was posted on the Friends’ website and Facebook page as our celebration of Rawlings’ birthday. Donna then made her program into a DVD with an additional nineteen minutes of Cross Creek scenes. As Park Manager Scott Spaulding has observed, Donna’s video is “a historic and present day look at the Cross Creek community intertwined with the stories of Marjorie that made it a magical presentation.”

Donna is currently working on a second edition of the video. As part of this effort, she has begun interviews, including that of Claude Jarman, Jr., regarding the making of the motion picture *The Yearling*. In addition a version of the Cross Creek video will be shown on WUFT-TV on Marjorie’s birthday, August 8, at 2:00 p.m.

In 2020 Donna also made a video with speaker Ron Haase on the subject of Cracker architecture for our Annual Meeting, it was a wonderful program with which to end a trying year. As Scott has remarked, “Donna is not only a superb volunteer and a Friend of the park, but a true Friend in every sense of the word, putting the needs of the park first in a truly selfless way.” Again, congratulations to Donna!

December 2021 Marks the 75th Anniversary of the Premiere of *The Yearling*

By Donna Green-Townsend

In 1939 Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings won a Pulitzer Prize for her novel *The Yearling*. MGM bought the rights to make a motion picture based on the novel. Actor Spencer Tracy was chosen for the leading role of Penny Baxter. That first attempt was scrapped after Tracy, who hated the bugs and Florida heat, chose to head back to California. But in 1945 MGM returned to Florida. The new effort starred Gregory Peck, Jane Wyman and young first-time actor Claude Jarman, Jr. The film depicted a struggling Florida family in the “Big Scrub” in what is now known as the Ocala National Forest. *The Yearling* told the coming of age story of a young boy and his orphaned pet deer and the tough decisions his family had to make to survive.



In a recent interview with me, 86-year-old Claude Jarman, Jr. recalled what filming was like in the 1940s in Florida:

Well, we actually got rained out. We started in April, and we left at the end of August, and it was steaming hot, no question about it. And I don't think there was much air-conditioning around during those days either. So we were staying at this little hotel in Silver Springs and, you know, going out and waiting around a lot. And then on the rain, it would rain for a week and we couldn't do anything so we're sitting in a car just waiting, and if we got a little break of ten minutes, “C'mon let's go, let's get this shot.” It was an extremely difficult movie to make.

Jarman recalled working with his favorite deer in the film:

The deer, I would say we probably used maybe four, some in some different scenes or whatever. But the one that I spent the most time with was Little Bambi. Everyone had a name. Bambi, Nina, Jughead was one of them. Bambi was the only one who literally would fold up his legs and would sit in your lap for hours.

The Yearling had several emotional scenes. Jarman described how he was able to get through the crying scenes: “I say it's me because I got so involved in that movie. I became that little boy. The first scene I did crying was when I shot the deer and that was amazing.”

Jarman stated that Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' novel changed his life:

Let's put it this way, if it hadn't been for Marjorie Rawlings I would probably still be living in Nashville, Tennessee because it was her writing that book that enabled the opportunity for me to change my life, change my life, no question about it. Having the opportunity to do what I've done throughout my life. If I go back, I wouldn't change anything. {It was} a great experience. *The Yearling* is still a very important part of my life. I could probably in another uh, give me a day I could probably recite the whole film.

The Yearling garnered seven Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture, taking home Oscars for Best Cinematography and Art Direction. Young actor Claude Jarman, Jr. won an Academy Juvenile Award.

The Yearling filming provided a variety of jobs for Florida residents building and working on the set. 88-year old Marion County resident Bobby Randall even picked up an acting role as Claude Jarman's double or stand-in. In a recent interview with me he recalled: “They said they were looking for a stand-in for Claude Jarman. Well, I knew who he was. I knew they was filming.” Casting personnel told Randall, “Well son, you're the right height and you're blonde-headed and you're blue-eyed. You weigh about 68 pounds or something like that.” Randall said a group of 30 boys was narrowed to six or seven:

They kept checking us and checking us. It seemed like a pretty good while and then here come Claude Jarman. They sent him up there. It was the first time I ever saw him. And he stood by each one of us and after a while one of those Hollywood men come up and said, “Son, I guess you got the job,” so just as simple as that.

Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm newly-elected board member Kathlyne Walkup Sheppard has many friends and relatives from Marion County who played active roles in the production of *The Yearling*, from constructing roads and fencing to building and maintaining the movie set. Sheppard's brother-in-law Jack Owen received pay from

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MGM to capture several of the fawns utilized in the film.

"He would look for their hoof prints. He would look for the mother," said Sheppard:

He knew the cycle of the deer first and foremost as a hunter because he grew up out in the woods . . . so he knew the signs and at the times the fawns would be born he would go out and look for a mother and so then he knew that within a certain range, a certain circle of feet in a circumference, there would be a fawn tucked away under a palmetto somewhere. He found probably ten of them he said and collected them for MGM, and they would pay him \$25.00 for every one that they used.



Kathlyne Walkup Sheppard

Sheppard has continued to collect and document family memories of not only what it was like to work on *The Yearling* production, but also of the old ways of life in Marion County's history:

Because they lived the life Marjorie wrote about. It was just their role in making that movie come alive. . . . They created, under advisement, such an authentic look for the Cracker world. And so in that context they were a very honest part of it themselves. . . . I descend from those very people who lived those lives. And so I know the truth of their lives and their struggles. That's a part of my history and background too. It needs to be remembered.

Sheppard is thankful Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings documented what life was like in the Florida scrub:

I think it was just somehow foreordained that paths cross, she and the Cracker folk . . . and that she would love them and that they would eventually embrace and they would love her . . . to preserve the authenticity of their ways of life. They are the backbone of Florida history and its growth and progression.

Mark your calendars for a weekend of special events on December 11-12 sponsored by the Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Premiere of *The Yearling* and highlighted by special guest Claude Jarman, Jr., who will be sharing his memories of the making of the motion picture.



"I was so pleased and very impressed with all the trail signs" -

Elaine Carson Spencer

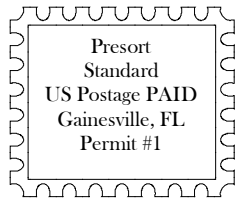
(Trail signs were sketched by the late Robert E. Carson.)

Pictured left to right: Roger Davis, Carson's granddaughter Kelly Schiffli and Carson's daughter Elaine Carson Spencer.)

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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

SAVE THE DATES	
August 7th, 10:00am:	Marjorie's 125th Birthday Party
November 20th, 1:00 pm:	Annual Meeting
November 20th, 2:00 pm:	Anne McCutchan Writer's Talk
December 11th and 12th:	75th Anniversary of the Premiere of <i>The Yearling</i> motion picture with special guest Claude Jarman, Jr.

<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
<p>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</p>					

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(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.

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Comments: