

News from the Creek

Friends of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc.

Volume 18 Number 3

Visit our website at: www.marjoriekinnanrawlings.org

Fall Quarterly 2015

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Elaine Carson-Spencer



The summer months at the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park were busy with volunteers and employees taking part in the annual cleaning and maintenance of Marjorie's home. With willing hands, many brushes and gallons of paint, the walls and the floors now sparkle. The linens are freshly cleaned and the books were taken down from the shelves and cleaned one at a time. A new volunteer offered his expertise in the task of inventorying all MKR books and important documents. With the help of the Friends, the Park now has a high-end scanner for inventorying pictures, books and other documents. It was with surprise that it took just days to get the scanner to the house; the volunteer was ecstatic. At another park where he had volunteered the purchase would have taken weeks instead of days. He was impressed and, of course, a happy volunteer!

On July 31st the park and the Friends celebrated Marjorie's 119th birthday; a little early this year instead of her actual birthday on August 8th. We combined her birthday with the last-day-of-summer tours. This turned out nicely as visitors who came to tour the famous writer's home joined the Friends and staff for her birthday party with cake and homemade ice cream (see photos below). This was an unexpected delight for our guests, who also had the "chance for a drawing" of a jar of home-made marmalade prepared from oranges grown in Marjorie's grove. The cooking of marmalade on Marjorie's woodstove has now become a monthly happening at the farm, thanks to our new Park Ranger, Carrie Todd.

The cooler weather is finally here, just in time for the reopening of the house for tours on the first of October. Approximately 13,000 visitors come each year from across the USA and other parts of the world just to see where Marjorie lived and became inspired by this area of Florida as it looked in the 1930's. Her house is bright with fresh paint, and intriguing smells from the kitchen drift through the rooms. We invite you to plan a visit to the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings State Park soon and experience the subtle pleasures of autumn in Cross Creek.

Photos of Marjorie's Birthday Party



Ranger Carrie Todd and volunteer churn ice cream



An unexpected delight...visitors to the park enjoyed cake and ice cream



Members Shirley and Pierre Thompson with Elaine Spencer (l to r)



Ginger, Dawson and Madison Mower and Sandy Tilton (l to r) ... relatives of Norton Baskin



As one guest said, Marjorie would have had a wonderful time with her friends and licking the dasher on the ice cream churn!!!!

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Pictured above, two great nieces of Norton Baskin, Sandy Tilton and Ginger Mower



Marjorie's Books

By Joan Sage

One morning last August I left the “impersonal highway” of CR 325, parked my car and walked to the entrance of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historical State Park. I was excited to begin my first Saturday as a volunteer and as I walked down the sandy path toward the house I admired all the orange trees with their branches heavy with fruit. I also noticed the palm trees, a tall old pecan tree and a huge magnolia tree. Then the barn came into view and finally Marjorie's house. Chickens scattered as I approached the front porch steps and there to greet me was park Ranger, Carrie Todd. Carrie took me around and showed me all that had to be done. She explained that for the months of August and September, the house would be closed for repairs and cleaning. She and the other park staff would be busy painting floors, cleaning furniture, beating rugs, and cleaning Marjorie's books. That was to be my job. Each book, she said, had to be located, checked off the list, condition noted, catalog number recorded, thoroughly dusted and then returned to a clean shelf.

I started with the living room bookcase and it wasn't long before I became intrigued by all the different names and titles. I found out that while many of the books are copies of the ones Marjorie owned (collected by the American Association of University Women), there are still quite a few that were actually hers. During her writing years she received a steady supply of books from Max Perkins, Scribners, and Norman Berg as well as from the authors themselves. Several of the books in the case are inscribed to her. There are also books from her writer friends who visited her at Cross Creek such as Edith Pope, Marcia Davenport, Sigrid Undset, and James Cabell. Also are copies of Proust whom she stood “in awe before” and the Bible of which she wrote, “If I must be pinned down to my “favorite” writers of olden times I should have to insist on whatever true writers translated the King James version of the Bible.”

Even though the bookcase takes up two corner walls in the living room and has five shelves including the top shelf, Marjorie wrote to her husband, Norton, in January 1952, “I am desperately out of books. At night I went through my bookcase and found nothing appealing.”

When I finished the living room case, I moved into the “display room”. This is where I found an amazing collection of books. I counted 63 copies of “The Yearling” in many different languages, in paperback form, hardback form, in large print, Armed Services Editions, Scribners's A editions, some books protected with mylar, some with dust jackets so fragile and torn they were put inside the books, and some signed with Marjorie's own signature. There were copies of every book she wrote, copies of her Pulitzer Prize Certificate and her Address at the Dedication to the UF library addition. There was even the delicate remains of Bartram's Travels so ruined it was sad to look upon. In another letter to Norton

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On the Park's Wish List.....

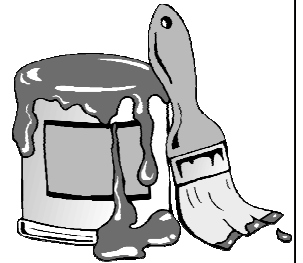
- Small Chest freezer (for marmalade/woodstove cooking ingredient preservation)
- Regular refrigerator (for new break area in the new office)
- Microwave (also for new office)



“An hour with the brush was a stolen pleasure”

By Carrie Todd Park Ranger

This year many of our conservation efforts during August and September were spent painting; in some rooms just a peeling wall, in others, once we started we just couldn't stop. Marjorie wrote of painting when she first moved to Cross Creek: “Inside the house, all the delight of the Florida sunlight vanished. The walls were painted a battleship gray and the floors a muddy ochre. ... It was four years before the gray of the last room was decently covered with white, money for paint being scarce, and time so filled with other work that an hour with the brush was a stolen pleasure. And even now, the house shining inside and out ... there is still a look of weather-worn shabbiness. It is a constant reminder that wind and rain and harsh sun and ever encroaching jungle are ready at any moment to take over. (Cross Creek 1942 pg 9-10)” Though we had 2 months instead of years, we endeavored to find the same Zen that Marjorie had reached about painting and maintenance of the house. We hoped to find peace with both the consistent weather-worn shabbiness (mostly in the form of mildew that regrows at an alarming rate) and the encroaching jungle fed by a wet summer. Our efforts, however, have left the inside reflecting that beautiful Florida sunshine once again and turned up a few surprises.



As we scraped away layers of old paint, it was like peeling back layers of time. When were the walls light blue? Is this the original gray? The most surprising find was the decorative hinges we uncovered on the front door of the guest bedroom. Bunny Wardlaw started the process of working on the door and its hardware. Sheila Holloway and I finished up the cleaning process, but wondered if we could remove that paint from the hinges, too. We were rewarded by our efforts as those layers of paint were hiding decorative hinges with designs that look like deer antlers, how fitting. (see the photos below).

Painting isn't the only task we do on the house during August and September. The staff out here at the farm worked tremendously hard scrubbing and cleaning the inside and out to stem the tide of mildew growth. Volunteers worked hard to update our collections management process. And we are still working hard to trim trees, mow grass and keep the weeds under control. It seems like October is the month when the house truly shines for at least a few weeks and then slowly returns to the beloved weather-worn look we (and Marjorie) love so much. Come out for a tour on Thursday - Sunday!



We are looking for a few good friends!

The Farm couldn't run without the hard work of both staff and volunteers, and we can always use more help. These are the volunteer jobs we hope to fill this fall to round out our work at the farm.

To volunteer at the park, please contact Park Ranger Carrie Todd at 352-466-3672 or by email carrie.todd@dep.state.fl.us. You can also find out more information and fill out a volunteer application at <https://www.floridastateparks.org/content/volunteers-how-apply>

If you fill out the online volunteer application please put Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park in the volunteer location section. You may also download the application and mail or fax it to the park attention Carrie Todd mail: 18700 S CR 325 Hawthorne Fl 32640 or fax: 352-466-4743

Tenant house interpretation

At MKR Farm we are very fortunate to have an authentic tenant house where we can show how workers in the citrus grove would have lived. It also gives us a chance to highlight the Black history of the farm. We would like to open the tenant house and allow people to walk through it while having a docent available to answer questions. Volunteers in this position would need to be comfortable speaking with the public and answering questions sensitively and accurately. Public speaking and customer service experience are a plus. Docents will be provided with information about Marjorie Rawlings as well as additional information about workers in rural north Florida and the families who lived and worked on the farm. You will wear 1930s period costume and be stationed at the tenant house which also has no climate control.

Days Needed: Thursday-Sunday 9 am-12pm or 1-5pm shifts Year Round

Special Demonstrations:

Do you have a special skill or know how to demonstrate homesteading work? We are looking for people who would share a craft with the public. Perhaps you can make lye soap or do needle point, maybe you would like to demonstrate how to field dress duck or clean fish after a good day on the lake. Do you make Christmas wreaths for your friends each year? We are looking for some volunteers to do demonstrations of important farm chores that would have been integral to life out here on the farm. Volunteers would be working at the historic house without climate control and need to wear 1930s period costume. Teaching experience or customer service experience is helpful.



Days needed: Thurs-Sun during tour season: October – July and/or willing to be scheduled for large group tours or school children.

House docent

This position is specifically to provide guided tours through the MKR farmhouse and provide one on one interpretation of the park in the farm yard. In order to do this work, you must be comfortable speaking in public and interacting with visitors. You must also have experience with or enjoy either teaching or customer service experience as you will be the main contact for visitors to the park. To be a successful tour guide, we will provide training and access to all of MKR's written works and historical narrative of the property. You will also be expected to help with other aspects of farm work that can vary from feeding ducks to flower arranging. The house does not have climate control and you will wear 1930's period costume.

Days needed: October-July Thurs-Sunday for regular tours (tour times are 10, 11 am and 1, 2, 3 and 4 pm). Tuesdays and Wednesdays 10, 11 am , 1pm for large group tours.

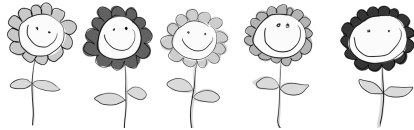
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Past Perfect and Collections Assistant

This position is for individuals who like to work with data and information. We are bringing MKR Farm into the 21st century collections management-wise and we need help doing it. This position will involve data entry of existing paper and computer records into the new PastPerfect museum collection management software. Other aspects of this work may include photography of individual collections pieces, researching new or existing pieces in our collection and labeling collections pieces. Attention to detail is very important for this kind of work. This work will be done in our research room that is climate controlled. Those with mobility issues or who are unable to work out of doors are encouraged to consider this volunteer position.

Days needed: Daily year-round with special needs in August and September when we focus on preservation and cleaning of our collections.



(Continued from page 2)

in 1944, Marjorie wrote, "Monday morning discovered the termites had completely destroyed my precious Bartram's Travels." Scribners later sent her another first edition to her Van Hornesville, NY, address in 1949. Perhaps the new copy never made it to Cross Creek and that is why, thankfully, she didn't throw the old one away. I did a lot of wondering while I cleaned the books for some of them had other stories to tell besides what was written on the pages. For instance on the flyleaf of "*The Sojourner*" was this inscription, "For my good friends the Flagler 2d floor nurses Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings January 1953". Did Marjorie go to the hospital when she fell on the stairs in Crescent Beach that year or did she promise the nurses a copy when she was there the year before? And who is this child that she writes, "For Ballard Cabell, his very own book with love from Marjorie for Christmas 1952". Come to find out, Ballard was 35 years old at the time of the writing but had the mentality of a 10 year old. He was the son of Marjorie's very good friend, James Branch Cabell (rhymes with rabble).

Ironically, one of the last books that I picked up (Harvest), was inscribed "For Marjorie with love from Norman Xmas 1953". Here again I wondered, since Marjorie died on December 14, did she receive an early Christmas gift or was this book returned to Norman Berg unopened? I guess we'll never know.

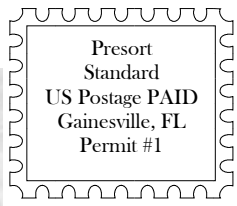
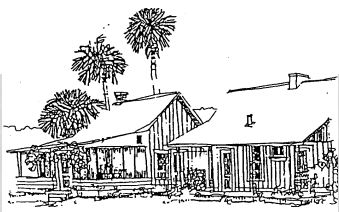
On my last day of work I walked back down the path thinking of Marjorie's house and how in two short months it had been turned upside down, cleaned in and out and then amazingly put all back together again. Curtains were re-hung, furniture put in place, clean rugs positioned on newly painted floors and books returned to shelves. I saw first hand all the hard work that was involved yet no one ever complained. And it became clear to me why so many dedicated individuals put so much into preserving Marjorie's home and writings. Certainly it is for the generations to come, but I think it's more than that for this great lady gave so much to us, with our small efforts we're able to give something back.

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Friends of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc.
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 Micanopy, FL 32667-0337

Website: www.marjoriekinnanrawlings.org
 Instagram: @MKRFarm
 Facebook

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!



2015 Friends of MKR Calendar

October 30, 2015 Woodstove Cooking Demo
 10:00am - 4:00 pm (Beautyberry or Roselle)

November 13, 2015 Woodstove Cooking Demo
 10:00 am- 4:00 pm (Beautyberry or Roselle)

December 8, 2015 Woodstove Cooking Demo
 10 am - 4:00 pm (Beautyberry or Roselle)

December 12, 2015
 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
 Outdoors

January 1, 2016
 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

CSO Holiday Party
 -Fresh Squeezed Orange Juice
 -Homemade biscuits w/Jelly
 -Hot Chocolate
 -Christmas Sing-a-long

New Year's Day Hike, 9:00 am
 Woodstove Cooking Demo

<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 MKRawlings Farm, Inc.
P.O. Box 337
Micanopy, FL 32667-0337

Membership in the Friends of 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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