

FOR RELEASE
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Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author Gets ‘Stamp of Approval’ *Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Stamp to Be Issued at Her Cross Creek, FL, Home*



A high-resolution image of the stamp is available for media use only at:
<http://www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/2008stamps/downloadcenter.htm>

Cross Creek, FL — Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings joined her friends Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Zora Neale Hurston and a host of other literary immortals as the latest inductee into the U.S. Postal Service’s Literary Arts commemorative stamp series. The 41-cent First-Class stamp bearing her likeness was dedicated today outside her Cross Creek, FL, home in the historic state park named in her honor. The stamp is available nationwide today.

A similar stamp dedication ceremony takes place Fri., Feb. 22, at 2 p.m. in St. Augustine at the Ripley’s Believe It or Not! Museum, formerly the Castle Warden Hotel, owned by Rawlings and her husband, Norton Baskin.

“What better location to immortalize Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings on postage than the captivating surroundings that inspired her work,” said U.S. Postal Service Senior Vice President, General Counsel, Mary Ann Gibbons. “It’s easy to understand why her 1942 memoir *Cross Creek* characterized her home as ‘a place of enchantment.’ The orange trees, pines, palm trees and towering oaks laced by Spanish Moss add to the tranquility of her cedar-shingled farmhouse nestled between a quiet country road and Lake Orange.”

Joining Gibbons in the dedication was a confidante and protégé of Rawlings whom she inspired to become a writer and artist. “Jake” J.T. Glisson, born in 1927, grew up knowing her as his parent’s next-door neighbor, “200 yards up the road.”

Rawlings described Glisson in her *Cross Creek* memoir:

It has been good to see the three children grow tall and bright and handsome. The oldest boy even had a year at the University. The youngest, "J.T.," was a tragic little cripple when I first knew him. I would see him hobbling down the road on his crooked legs, with the luminous expression on his face that seems peculiar to those we call the "afflicted." Tom and his wife were not of the breed to accept an evil that could be changed, and they worked day and night to save money to send the boy away for braces and treatments. Now he too is tall and strong, and I saw him ride by yesterday on his own dwarf-mule, talking to himself and lifting his hand to an invisible audience. He was, I knew, the Lone Ranger or perhaps Buck Rogers, but he took time out courteously from his duties to call "Hey!" to me, then returned to his important and secret activities.

"She was a true inspiration to me and everyone who knew her," Glisson explained, "When I told my dad I wanted to be a writer and illustrator, he tersely stated he wasn't raising a 'pink pencil pusher,'" but Miss Rawlings told me not to worry about it. She would take care of convincing my dad."

Also joining in the dedication was Phil May Jr., Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society Founding Member, and Dana Bryan, Policy Coordinator, Florida State Parks Department, Director's Office.

"We are gratified the Postal Service is recognizing Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' importance to our nation's literary heritage," said Jeter, "This stamp will help communicate her contributions and entice young readers to explore her writings."

"The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park is an exceptional cultural and historic treasure in Florida bringing to life the time period and natural setting that inspired Rawlings most notable works," said Ballard. "I encourage citizens and visitors to experience her world as it is preserved at her historic state park."

Rawlings owned the Cross Creek property from 1928 until her death in 1953. It was here — living among the people in the backwoods of Florida — where she wrote her 1939 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Yearling* (1938). The popularity of her memoir *Cross Creek* (1942), drew reader suggestions to write on local cuisine. Interspersed with her recipes, commentary and anecdotes, *Cross Creek Cookery* (1942) continues to be popular with lovers of southern cooking.

The property is located approximately 20 miles southeast of Gainesville. The park includes the home, restored and preserved as it was in the 1930s, and a barn, tenant house, citrus grove, seasonal garden, chickens, ducks, nature trails and a 1940 Oldsmobile Hydromatic very similar to her own. In 2006, Rawling's Cross Creek house and farmyard were designated a national historic landmark. Sitting on her original homemade table is an old typewriter cradling a yellowed page from one of her novels; beside it, a notepad, pen and cigarette-laden ashtray sit undisturbed — as if she stepped away for a moment.

For additional information, visit the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park at: <http://www.floridastateparks.org/marjoriekinnanrawlings/>. Other information on Rawlings can be found through the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society: www.marjoriekinnanrawlings.ucf.edu and the Friends of the M.K. Rawlings Farm, Inc. at: <http://host69.hrwebservices.net/~marjori/>.

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An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that visits every address in the nation — 146 million homes and businesses. It has 37,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to pay for operating expenses, not tax dollars. The Postal Service has annual revenues of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail.

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Backgrounder

Born Aug. 8, 1896, in Washington, DC, Marjorie Kinnan had a desire to write at an early age. Starting at age six, she contributed to the children's page of the *Washington Post* for nearly a decade. She completed a degree in English at the University of Wisconsin in 1918. Afterwards, she lived for a year in New York City, where she worked for a YWCA magazine and newsletter. In May 1919, she married Charles Rawlings, who had been her classmate and fellow writer on the university literary magazine. They lived in Louisville, KY, and then Rochester, NY, where Marjorie wrote features for local newspapers.

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings first encountered the people and landscapes of the Florida scrub country in 1928, when she and her husband vacationed there while visiting his brothers. Later that year, Marjorie and Charles Rawlings purchased more than 70 acres of property in the small town of Cross Creek. Their homestead included an eight-room farmhouse, a tenant house, barn, and hundreds of fruit trees. Charles Rawlings left Cross Creek after he and Marjorie divorced in 1933, but she continued to live at the farmstead.

Inspired by the culture of her rural neighbors, she submitted a collection of fictionalized anecdotes to *Scribner's* magazine. They were published under the title "Cracker Chidlings: Real Tales from the Florida Interior" in the February 1931 issue. The piece was the first of more than 40 short works of fiction and nonfiction she wrote for magazines such as *Scribner's*, *Harper's*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's* and *The New Yorker*. "Cracker Chidlings" also began the work that occupied Rawlings for the rest of her life: documenting the culture and folkways of rural Florida.

After publishing her first two novels — *South Moon Under* in 1933 and *Golden Apples* in 1935 — Rawlings achieved major success with *The Yearling*. Published in 1938, *The Yearling* tells the story of 12-year-old Jody Baxter, who lives with his parents in the Florida backwoods. When a rattlesnake bite prompts his father to shoot and kill a doe to save his own life, Jody adopts the doe's fawn as a pet. The rambunctious fawn soon causes trouble at the farmstead, forcing the Baxters to make a difficult decision during uncertain times.

Published to rave reviews, *The Yearling* sold 240,000 copies during its first year in print and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1939. *The New York Herald Tribune* compared the book's protagonist, Jody Baxter, to Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, and a *Time* magazine reviewer wrote that *The Yearling* stood "a good chance, when adults have finished with it, of finding a permanent place in adolescent libraries."

Cross Creek, Rawlings' memoir about her neighbors and their lives, was published in 1942. *Time* magazine praised the book as a "reminiscent, unhurried, humorous account of how she discovered and took possession of a new United States literary landscape." *The New York Times* wrote that Rawlings "catches the community of land and people...in the strength and mirth and loveliness of her book."

Because of the popularity of *Cross Creek*, Rawlings took the suggestion of readers and created an entire book on local cuisine. In 1942, *Scribner's* published *Cross Creek Cookery*, which consisted of recipes interspersed with Rawlings' commentary and anecdotes.

Rawlings' novel *The Sojourner* was published in 1953; the book, which told the story of 60 years in the life of a farmer, was noted for its focus on loss, loneliness, and human relationships as well as for its Biblical echoes. Another novel, *The Secret River*, was published posthumously in 1955, one year before the anthology *The Marjorie Rawlings Reader*.

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings died of a cerebral hemorrhage in December 1953 at the age of 57.

The Postal Service's Literary Arts series was introduced in 1979 with the issuance of the John Steinbeck stamp. Other inductees, in chronological order, include: Edith Wharton, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, T.S. Eliot, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Marianne Moore, William Saroyan, Dorothy Parker, James Thurber, Tennessee Williams, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Thornton Wilder, Stephen Vincent Benét, Ayn Rand, Thomas Wolfe, Ogden Nash, Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin, Robert Penn Warren, Katherine Anne Porter and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Today, the Cross Creek farmhouse where Rawlings lived and wrote is the centerpiece of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings State Historic Site. In September 2006, the house and farmyard were designated a national historic landmark, and the house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Philatelic Fact Sheet

Philatelic Products

There are three philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 462361 – First-Day Cover, \$0.79
- 462391 – Ceremony Program, \$6.95
- 462393 – First-Day-Cover Keepsake Full Pane with cover, \$8.99

How to Order First-Day Covers

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or by writing to:

Information Fulfillment
Dept. 6270
U.S. Postal Service
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, by telephone at 800-STAMP-24, or at the Postal Store website at www.usps.com/shop. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others, and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Stamp
Postmaster
6300 SE 221st Street
Hawthorne, FL 32640-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by April 21, 2008.