



Cross Creek

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings , Edward Shenton (Illustrator)

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

Cross Creek

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings , Edward Shenton (Illustrator)

Cross Creek Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings , Edward Shenton (Illustrator)

Cross Creek is the warm and delightful memoir about the life of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings—author of *The Yearling*—in the Florida backcountry.

Originally published in 1942, *Cross Creek* has become a classic in modern American literature. For the millions of readers raised on *The Yearling*, here is the story of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings's experiences in the remote Florida hamlet of Cross Creek, where she lived for thirteen years. From the daily labors of managing a seventy-two-acre orange grove to bouts with runaway pigs and a succession of unruly farmhands, Rawlings describes her life at the Creek with humor and spirit. Her tireless determination to overcome the challenges of her adopted home in the Florida backcountry, her deep-rooted love of the earth, and her genius for character and description result in a most delightful and heartwarming memoir.

Cross Creek Details

Date : Published March 20th 1996 by Scribner (first published 1942)

ISBN : 9780684818795

Author : Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings , Edward Shenton (Illustrator)

Format : Paperback 384 pages

Genre : Autobiography, Memoir, Classics, Nonfiction

 [Download Cross Creek ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Cross Creek ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Cross Creek Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings , Edward Shenton (Illustrator)

From Reader Review Cross Creek for online ebook

Ernie says

I really didn't know much about Florida until my daughter moved down there 5 or 6 years ago. Every visit has turned up some amazing aspect of nature or history. For example, I grew up in the north-east and springs were trickles of water that emerged from wet meadows on mountainsides; in Florida springs are entire rivers that leap, full blown, from a hole in the ground (no mountainsides). During the last visit, a month ago, my daughter took us to Majorie Kinnan Rawlings home just south of Gainesville. Amazing. While I was aware of her most famous book, *The Yearling*, I have not read it. (I feel bad about that but she is only one of thousands of great writers that I haven't read. Yet. I am working on it.) --- She lived in this area of Florida from the late 1920s to 1953. She was a northeasterner who used an inheritance to buy a Florida orange grove, on a romantic whim. With the orange grove and her budding writing career, she could afford to live there. The romance did not long affect her husband and he left. She stayed on, writing about a community and life that are both unique to Cross Creek and characteristic of people everywhere.

Cross Creek is an autobiographical account of the place. However, it is less about MKR than the people and the region. Each chapter can stand alone and describes a person, an event, a season, food,... elements of life. While there is a chronological aspect to the book, beginning with her early experiences as a newcomer and leading to stories as an established resident, it is less about her and more about the region. I found the first two chapters slow going because they largely dealt with descriptions of the geography of the region and little about people or events. But once past these introductory chapters, the book was delightful. MKR has an ear for dialect and represents it well. Both the writing and dialect are poetry. -- Often, in an aside, she describes how different events or characters formed the basis for one of the characters in her books or stories.

I highly recommend it. This book was delightful reading and gives insight to a time and place that are unique and almost certainly gone. In most cases, that is good because life was hard. One of the reasons why Majorie Rawlings became an accepted and integral member of this Southern, rural community was that she was one of the resources for survival. That seems a bit stark... but it was a delightful book that, while describing the diverse ways that people overcome adversity, was more about the wonder of living at this time in this beautiful Central Florida rural community.

Cindy says

Vacationing in St. Augustine Fla during the winter was a delight, and to find, as I like to do, a book about the area makes the enjoyment of the respite from ordinary life even better. Cross Creek was the Florida find. I had seen the movie years ago, and was captivated by the time and place as well as Ms. Rawlings and her neighbors at "the creek". As we know movies are normally a thin unsatisfying version of the book they are based on, so as I held the book in my hand I was anxious to read it. I was not disappointed, that said, before I finished it, I checked this site to see the opinions of other readers...that was disappointing. The author was accused of being a racist, and while I can certainly understand due to language of the account of Cross Creek, I would have to defend Ms. Rawlings as a woman of her times, but enlightened for them. How can this be said when the "N" word was used and references to blacks that are extremely offensive? I will use her words. "We know that in our relations with one another, the disagreements are unimportant and the union vital." She speaks here of all the residents of the creek. "How can any of us be cruel to one another? How are wars possible, and hate, when we must all face such things? Death is the enemy, and life itself is inimical, for all its bounty. We must hold one another close against the cosmic perils." Beyond her words both these and those that are offensive, are her acts of kindness and her love for the people and the land that breeds

individuals of character. As a foreigner she stumbles awkwardly among them, and finally learned how each person, is vital to the other. Her last few lines give the reason I underlined so much of this book, "We know only that we are impelled to fight on the side of the creative forces. We know only that a sense of well-being sweeps over us when we have assisted life rather than destroyed it...yet when a wave of love takes over a human being, love of another...love of nature, love...such an exaltation takes him that he knows he has put his finger on the pulse of the great secret and the great answer."

Denise Moore says

I first read this book when I was in my early twenties. I did not know much about truth, goodness, and beauty back then, but for some reason this book 'felt' beautiful to me. At the time I could not explain what I meant by that word, beautiful. At that time, I did not value beauty. It was while reading this book that I first thought to myself, Wow, this writing is beautiful!.
Now, some forty or so years later, I have decided to revisit books that I had read earlier in my life as a young adult. Would they have the same impact on me? Would I still love these works?
Cross Creek still 'feels' beautiful to me. I re-read passages over again for the simple joy it brings. The words, the sentences, and the images described, are like a warm blanket on a rainy, cold day to my being.
I am a reader; I read a lot of books. But not many books touch my 'feeling' of beauty like this book.

Catherine says

Memoir of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' experiences after purchasing a primitive farmhouse and large orange grove in north-central Florida. I read elsewhere that she bought it with her husband and they divorced within a year of moving there; he's not mentioned at all. Very few characters are recurring, and the chapters are not chronological until near the end of the book. This makes it feel somewhat like a compilation of short stories, but with a common thread: it's easy to put it down for a few days or a week and then pick it up again. Humorous, self-deprecating tales of her adjustment to this new lifestyle and poetic descriptions of flora and fauna are occasionally interrupted by jarring comments such as "I should have understood that only in rare instances can a Negro work for long on his own initiative." From the overall tone, I believe this is more representative of the time and place than of MKR's true outlook, but it definitely marred my enjoyment of the book.

Rhonda says

I really enjoyed this book. Published in 1942, it is an authentic peek into Florida history and is chock full of autobiographical anecdotes as well as insights into Florida plants and animals, farming, hunting, small-town politics, and the local socioeconomics of the times. And throughout it all, Pulitzer Prize winning author Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings breathes great character, humor and insight.

I specifically enjoy her approach to writing about all of the nature around her. I noticed this when I read *The Yearling* also. You can tell when you read just one paragraph where she's talking about a pair of redbirds in her front yard that she has spent considerable time watching, noting, and listening. She has an eye for detail that has made me realize many things I've been missing in my day to day just because I wasn't paying the kind of attention she did. She really does breathe life into everything going on around her and I can identify with her feelings about our earth and hard work and having to put something in to get something back. It

would have been a great opportunity to have known her.

SK says

Rawlings is a lyrical writer who loves the earth and nature. The book originally published in 1942 is a substantial "should read" and I refer you to Rawlings' background in the "reviews" section. A memoir of Rawlings, the book describes her life as a young woman who takes on running a Florida farm in the 1930's. Her city background and her resourceful determination to live in rural backwoods are delightful. Some of her financial decisions were a little hard to believe. With the benefit of hindsight many criticize her racist attitudes. I find her attitude to be no better nor worse than might be expected. It irritates me to hear one-sided singular moralistic judgments.

Abigail says

I feel a special kinship with Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings--we both experience some sort of mystical, spiritual connection with the wildlands, orange groves, and creatures of Florida. Visiting her home a couple of weeks ago for my birthday day trip was exhilarating--I recognized bits of her land and home from her autobiography, and the tour guide made her stories come alive again: the outhouse with the screen door, her fireplace, the hunting dogs, orange groves, pecan trees, the neighbors she adored and fought with, and the snakes.

But Marjorie and I differ in our spiritual beliefs: She felt there were negative and positive cosmic forces at work in her community and in her life, and she even put some stock in the African-Americans' voodoo.

I looked around the state park (her property) and saw God's creative hand in the big live oaks and wispy Spanish moss, the chickens and ducks, and even in the coziness of her kitchen with its wood stove.

Never have I related to and felt overwhelming joy as I have in her poetic phrases (her descriptions of sunsets are beyond amazing) and I've written a good many of them down to mull over later. The copy I've just finished is the library's, and my younger son realized how much I loved her book and told me he'd buy me my own copy when he grows up. I'll love to read it again.

Bobby Underwood says

Cross Creek is one of the finest memoirs ever written, filled with grace and beauty from one of America's greatest writers, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. Perhaps no other writer has so perfectly and honestly captured a place and time like Rawlings did in Cross Creek. It will transport you to that small acreage of backwoods Florida and cause you to wish for a life such as this.

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings purchased a seventy-two acre orange grove in this remote area and fled her aristocratic life in the city to perfect her craft and get published. It is here all her beloved books would be written, including this memoir covering the years of hardships and beauty at Cross Creek. Rawlings was in many ways reborn in Cross Creek, and she would leave behind literary achievements such as "South Moon Under," "Golden Apples," "When the Whipporwill," "Cross Creek Cookery," and of course, her Pulitzer winning, "The Yearling."

Her close relationships with her neighbors at the creek, both black and white, are told with humor and humanity. Their lives were often filled with hardships but serenity as well, for all of them had chosen to live this kind of life rather than conform to society. Especially poignant are Rawlings's observations of a young destitute couple who would later be portrayed so movingly in *Jacob's Ladder*.

Rawlings's recollections of her friendships with Moe and his daughter Mary, who was Moe's reason for living, and the only one in his family who cared whether he came or went, are told with such beauty we feel pain ourselves when he takes his last breath at the creek. Rawlings's deep friendships over the years with Tom and Old Martha are told with humor, honesty and a gift for description few have ever captured on paper.

Tinged with sadness is Marjorie's relationship both as employer and friend to 'Geechee. Rawlings would attempt to help her, but to no avail, as this sweet personality slowly became an unemployable alcoholic. Her mistreatment at the hands of a womanizer unworthy of her love was at the heart of her problem. It is perhaps also at the bottom of some bitter comments from Rawlings.

But *Cross Creek* is about the earth and our relationship to it. Rawlings came to believe over time that when we lose our connection to the earth, we lose a part of ourselves. The great and wondrous beauty of nature, from magnolia blossoms and rare herbs to Hayden mangos and papaya, are as much a part of this memoir as the people. Particularly hilarious are this gifted writer's descriptions of a pet racoon of such mischievous nature and cantankerous disposition that it almost seems human.

Rawlings's world at the creek is perhaps her legacy, a gift given to the reader we can never forget. In order to enjoy this memoir, however, one must take into consideration a number of factors. Published in 1942 and covering many years prior in a backwoods area of Florida, this was a time when racial equality was a distant dream. Some may be offended by Rawlings's casual - though never mean spirited - observations.

Rawlings honestly relates actual conversations from this time and place between blacks and whites, and blacks to other blacks. While Rawlings herself treated everyone fairly, a long string of farmhands prone to drink and violence - including the man who would destroy her friend and employee 'Geechee - prompted Rawlings to lump an entire race into one group, her friends at the creek being rare exceptions. I do not feel this caveat should keep anyone from reading this most beautiful and heartwarming of memoirs, as this is an unflinchingly honest look at a time and a place, as well as attitudes - warts and all.

Rawlings's graceful prose, whether describing a chorus of frogs singing at night as a Brahms waltz, the scent of hibiscus drifting through the air at dusk or myraid of dishes meticulously prepared and labored over for hours, is delightful and unforgettable. *Cross Creek* will make you hungry for succulent fruits, cornbread and hot biscuits with wild plum jelly, and the living of life itself.

Reading this lovingly written memoir will leave you with a wistful desire to walk away from society as Rawlings did, and live the life we crave in our very being, even if that life can only be lived in our hearts.

"Cross Creek belongs to the wind and the rain, to the sun and the seasons, to the cosmic secrecy of seed, and beyond all, to time."

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

(1896-1953)

Diane Barnes says

I really enjoyed this memoir of Marjorie Rawlings years in Cross Creek, Florida. She began her sojourn there in 1928, at a time in Florida's history before tourists and developers got ahold of it. There was still wilderness and the type of individualists it took to appreciate and make a living in this type of environment. Rawlings best fiction came from this setting, including "The Yearling" which won a Pulitzer for its portrayal of a family trying to make a go of a farm in backwoods Florida. Her descriptions of nature, the animals, both wild and tame, and the people she dealt with at the Creek, are radiant with her love and admiration. Like this sentence: "Here in Florida the seasons move in and out like nuns in soft clothing, making no rustle in their passing."

Let me just add that the chapter she wrote on the food and cooking of the region, "Our Daily Bread" was one of my favorites. She prided herself on her culinary skills and also wrote a cookbook, "Cross Creek Cookery" which I'm going to have to buy.

Highly recommended to anyone needing a passport to a simpler, earlier time. One qualifier though: some language and opinions on race relations of the time may offend some readers.

June Geiger says

There are not enough stars.

Carol Douglas says

Cross Creek is a beautifully written memoir by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, author of the much-loved children's book *The Yearling*. Cross Creek tells how she came to live in a remote part of Central Florida. Her descriptions of nature are vivid.

There was one big problem that made it difficult for me to read the book: Her descriptions of African Americans are extremely patronizing. I'm sure that she liked some of the people she described, and that her way of talking was common at the time, but it's pretty hard to take today. She doesn't use the "N" word, but she sees African Americans as more primitive than white people.

Her descriptions of her white neighbors, virtually all of whom are far less educated than she was, are more respectful.

I read this book because a friend of mine is an expert on Rawlings. Although it gives the flavor of Old Florida, I would hesitate to recommend it.

Christine CC says

This is a 1942 edition purchased at 'The Julian Book House' in Julian, CA. caught my eye because the cover was so pretty and, being from Florida, it seemed like something I should have read a long time ago.

I started it this week and I'm a multi-book at a time reader, so I'll complete it in due time. However, I'm already being carried away by Ms Rawlings deep love of the simplicity of her rural community, the people and the natural landscape. She speaks of a lone Magnolia among the Orange Trees in the grove, a tree that rises symmetrically into the deep blue of the sky, and how that green against blue is her touchstone; a physical object that brings her back to who and where she is in the moment. I have had this very experience, witnessing a tree against sky and had the feeling of being full from the experience...

Rawlings managed to capture rural Florida life in her time brilliantly. Her characters are so well developed and so easy to come to love, despite their many shortcomings. She is a wonderful woman to spend time with and get to know as you turn her pages and one that I sorely missed after closing the back cover. Great work.

Judy says

I've never read anything by MKR, not even The Yearling. I had a lovely old copy of that classic, and I gave it away because the movie about the boy and his deer was so sad. I watched it twice and that was it. My only consolation was that "it was just a story." I convinced myself that nothing like that would happen in "real life."

I didn't know what to expect from Cross Creek. I was pleased to find a couple of meaningful quotes on the first few pages:

p 10 "At one time or another most of us at the Creek have been suspected of a degree of madness. Madness is only a variety of mental nonconformity ..."

p 11 "We cannot live without the earth or apart from it, and something is shrivelled in a man's heart when he turns away from it and concerns himself only with the affairs of men."

This book is more a biography of a place than it is an autobiography of the author. I found myself referring to Wikipedia for some factual information. Cross Creek gives insight to Rawling's 'soul,' but doesn't include much about significant events in her life.

I see why people have commented on Rawling's racist attitude, but the writing fits the times and local behaviors. It's not comfortable, but that was life and this is Rawling's story; she is writing of her own experiences and thoughts. Anything different wouldn't ring true.

The whole section about cooking was too long. I don't care to read about food preparation and it made me sad to think of all the animals that have been destroyed because people like the taste of them (as opposed to necessary for survival). Again, this is Rawling's story so I wouldn't want it written differently, but it did make me reflect on my own beliefs and attitudes.

Her descriptions of the flora and animals of Florida amaze and intrigue me. Do places like she describes still exist, or have they given way to planners and bulldozers? I am surprised that she enjoyed hunts as much as she did, even though she claims that she wasn't a very good shot.

Her concluding statement matches my belief about land ownership: "It seems to me that the earth may be borrowed but not bought. It may be used, but not owned. ... We are tenants and not possessors, lovers and not masters."

Photos to accompany the descriptions would have been wonderful. Of course, photos taken back in the 1930s would have been black and white.

Melissa says

This is one of those books that I've felt I "should" read, jsut because I've been hearing about it for so long. Some of the writing was beautiful. However, I couldn't quite get over how condescending she was to her neighbors.

Some of this was certainly a racist thing. I always have mental battles when this occurs in books of the period when that was generally more accepted. On the one hand, it's a time capsule. But I can never completely remove my own views on all of this. It's really come down (at least in my mind) to whether or not the racism effects the flavor of the whole book. And in this case, it did.

I also thought the organization of the book was difficult and I found myself wanting more about how she came to Cross Creek, the writing process (order, etc) and just more about her life.

Overall, some pleasant moments, but it was a struggle to get through.

Libby says

Wow. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was a wonderful writer. The kind of writer who draws you in, as you are absorbed into her world via her descriptive and often wryly humorous writing. These stories of 1930s and 1940s life in back country Florida on an orange grove are interesting and charming.

But then there is the racism. Her casually racist comments paint a sad picture of pre-Civil Rights life in rural Florida, and at times I actually covered my mouth with my hand in horror as I read. Rawlings, who is white, is nice and kind, but she seems to see herself as a benevolent benefactor to black people who are not her equals, as much as she seems to like and respect them and consider some to be dearest friends. The N-word is used casually throughout, jarring and ugly and sickening every time.

High points of this Florida memoir for me: the chapter where Rawlings grabs her shotgun and shoots a neighbor's marauding pig, tired of it eating her petunias. The rich, folksy, fascinating writing such as: "When we were growing up and there were so many of us in the family, all we had was cornpone and white bacon, and we had to eat it or go hungry." And "Some years ago I met a tame raccoon for the first time."

And then there is the chapter titled Black Shadows, a weird, bitter retelling of Rawlings' difficulties with her black employees. I could hardly believe my eyes. This chapter begins, "I am not of the race of Southerners who claim to understand the Negro," "...the possibility of real affection between the individuals of the two races, conditioned by the fact that one is master, and the other, for all of Lincoln, still a slave."

I skimmed, repelled and not wanting to spend any more time in this, but really wanting to get a feel for Rawlings' writings, because next I will read "Idella, Marjorie Rawlings 'Perfect Maid'," the 1992 memoir by Idella Parker, who was Rawlings' housekeeper for 10 years.

As brutal as it feels to read, it is enlightening and educational to read Rawlings' words. She is so frank, so honest. And at heart, kind. I wonder if she ever unlearned her ways of thinking about others who have different ethnicity from hers, as times changed and consciousness was raised, and people learned. People did learn, right? We aren't still there...right?

Julie Davis says

A souvenir picked up while on vacation in St. Augustine, Florida. I vaguely recall reading this when a young adult but clearly I was unprepared to appreciate the author's lyrical prose style which is laced with a wonderful sense of humor.

It is a clear look at life in back country Florida in 1942 and so sometimes is a bit cringe-worthy. But at that time those things were not cringe worthy which is surely worth reflecting upon in terms of what we do not see as cringe worthy in our own society but which will be revealed as such in the future.

Pam says

This is one of my favorite books of all time. I've read 3 times. Rawlings engagement with nature and people is so powerful and beautifully written - and she pulls you in to her world.

Amanda says

The first half was difficult to read. I wanted very much to hold Rawlings as a bit of an idol: an independent woman of the 30s making her own way in Florida. But I found it very hard to admire her in light of her very raw racism. Although she seems to have had some strong personal relationships with black people, there seems to be always a veil of judgment between her and them -- an otherness that is hard to read.

The second half, when Rawlings moves from personal relationships to her relationships with the Florida land and weather, was lovely and lilting and delightful. Uncoupled from the first half, I would have thoroughly enjoyed it. But as a healing elixir, the second half was polluted by the bitter taste of the first half.

Bobbi says

I loved this book. I've cut and pasted the description from Goodreads, because I couldn't have said it better. If you haven't read it, you've missed Rawlings' best story.

Originally published in 1942, Cross Creek has become a classic in modern American literature. For the millions of readers raised on *The Yearling*, here is the story of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings's experiences in the remote Florida hamlet of Cross Creek, where she lived for thirteen years. From the daily labors of managing a seventy-two-acre orange grove to bouts with runaway pigs and a succession of unruly farmhands, Rawlings describes her life at the Creek with humor and spirit. Her tireless determination to overcome the challenges of her adopted home in the Florida backcountry, her deep-rooted love of the earth, and her genius for character and description result in a most delightful and heartwarming memoir.

Lisa Corathers says

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings found her Eden in the rural community of Cross Creek, FL. The author's writing

has a truly wonderful cadence. I especially enjoyed her ability to describe the bounty of Florida's nature...even those dreaded water moccasins! Some of the stories were hilarious, while others quite poignant or outright sad. As much as I admired her narrative abilities, the one thing I found very disturbing was how she wrote of her poor black neighbors. I believe that some of this was due to her faithfulness in reporting how the locals talked and believed, some of it was due to her own beliefs, and some of it was perhaps due to the era in which she wrote (the book was published in 1942). If you absolutely cannot abide the use of the "n" word (which I detest), do not read this book. The author, herself, was somewhat respectful in her use of "Negroes," but some of her musings definitely made me cringe.
