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Dean Faulkner Wells

Norman Mailer

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THE FAULKNER NEWSLETTER



& Yoknapatawpha Review

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April-June 1996

Henry Falkner's Portrait, Grave



PORTRAIT OF HENRY FALKNER, prodigal son of Col. W.C. Falkner, was turned to the wall in a linen closet for years in the Oxford home of Maud Butler Falkner, Falkner's mother. It now hangs in a bathroom at the home, now the home of Falkner's niece, Dean Faulkner Wells and husband, Larry Wells. As shown, the marker above the son's grave in the Falkner family plot at the Ripley, Miss., cemetery reads simply "Henry."

1996 Conference

"Natural World" To Be Theme Of 23rd Event

The theme of "Faulkner and the Natural World" will be explored by visiting scholars and other participants at the 1996 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference July 28-August 2 at the University of Mississippi.

Emphasis at this year's 23rd annual conference "on the concrete world of nature: the natural environment, the body, the physical reality of Faulkner's fiction," will follow concerns examined at recent conferences with ideological and social aspects of Faulkner's work, the Ole Miss Center for the Study of Southern Culture, which sponsors the conference with the University's Department of English, points out in the Winter 1996 issue of *The Southern Register*.

Visiting scholars who will be addressing the 1996 conference include Thomas McHaney of Georgia State University; Lawrence Buell, Harvard University; Myra Jehlen, Rutgers University; Diane Roberts, University of Alabama; Louise Westling, University of Oregon; A. Walton Litz, Princeton University; and Jay Watson of the University of Mississippi.

Among planned lecture topics known by *Faulkner Newsletter* at this writing are "Faulkner's Fiction and the Claims of the Natural World," "The Body of the Land and the Africans in *Absalom, Absalom!*," "The Representation of 'Blood' in *Light in August*," and "Faulkner and the American Regional/International Imagination."

Repeat features of the conference will be discussions by Faulkner family members and townspeople, sessions on "Teaching Faulkner," dramatic presentations pertaining to Faulkner's work, and a picnic at Faulkner's Rowan Oak home.

Also planned are films, exhibitions, tours of Oxford, Ripley and other North Mississippi locales associated with Faulkner, and a party at Oxford's Square Books.

Full particulars on the conference are available from the Center for Continuing Studies, University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677, tel. 601-232-7282.

Faux Faulkner Judging Party At Elaine's

A Jack Daniel's Faux Faulkner Contest judging party will enliven the always lively conversation at Elaine's Restaurant in New York on April Fool's Day.

Reading and discussing semi-finalist entries in the seventh annual Faulkner write-alike competition and selecting the winner at an evening event April 1 at Elaine's will be judges George Plimpton, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Tom Wicker and John Berendt.

Serving as co-hostesses for the April 1 repast will be Dean Faulkner Wells, Faulkner's niece and coordinator of Faux Faulkner, and Lynne Tolley of Lynchburg, Tenn., Jack Daniel's great-grandniece.

The annual contest for "the best of bad Faulkner" draws on parodies of Faulkner's distinctive writing style in entries playing on that style and on Faulkner's themes and plots.

Faux Faulkner is co-sponsored by *The Faulkner Newsletter* and the University of Mississippi's Center for the Study of Southern Culture. The winning entry in the 1996 contest will be published in the July-September issue of the newsletter.

Henry Falkner Rescued From Linen Closet by His Great-Great-Niece

By DEAN FAULKNER WELLS

In the months after my grandmother Nanie (Maud Butler Falkner) died in the fall of 1960, our family was faced with the sad responsibility of settling her estate. When her sons, William, Jack and John, her daughter-in-law, Louise, and four grandchildren—Jimmy, Chooky, Jill and I—began to go through her things and sort them out, we realized we were facing an enormous task. Nanie had spent a lifetime collecting and storing keepsakes and mementos. One item, an old painting, was so well hidden that no doubt even she had forgotten about it.

On the surface, she led a spartan existence, drawing a cold bath every morning regardless of the temperature outside or the availability of hot water. She ate very little, two pieces of intentionally burnt toast for breakfast and supper, carefully cut into three strips, with black coffee and saccharin. Noon meals were only a bit more substantial. She ate all her meals exclusively in the dining room. The kitchen was not for Nanie.

She never wasted anything, whether food, time or money, making austerity not only a virtue but a way of life. In the winter, before breakfast, she went down to the basement, cleaned out the clinkers and stoked up her coal-burning furnace. She was neat, disciplined, orderly and controlled. This was a house where Mr. Ray, the butter-and-egg man, appeared promptly at two every Friday afternoon for 30 years.

In stark contrast, she was a packrat of the first order. Her attic contained stacks of newspapers saved for posterity if any of her progeny were mentioned—from the picture of me and my dog "Little Bit," victorious in a fourth-grade pet show at Oxford Grammar School, to the announcements of William's winning the Nobel Prize. The stacks of magazines included every *Life* and *Time* ever delivered to her doorstep (each one bearing the address label, "Mrs. M.C. Falkner, South Lamar, Oxford, Miss."). Her subscription to *Time* ceased the very day a photo of her "Billy" arriving in Japan under the influence of alcohol was published. After *Collier's* third rejection of Jack's short stories (he

(Continued Page 3)

A Checklist

LaLonde Study Examines Rites Of Passage

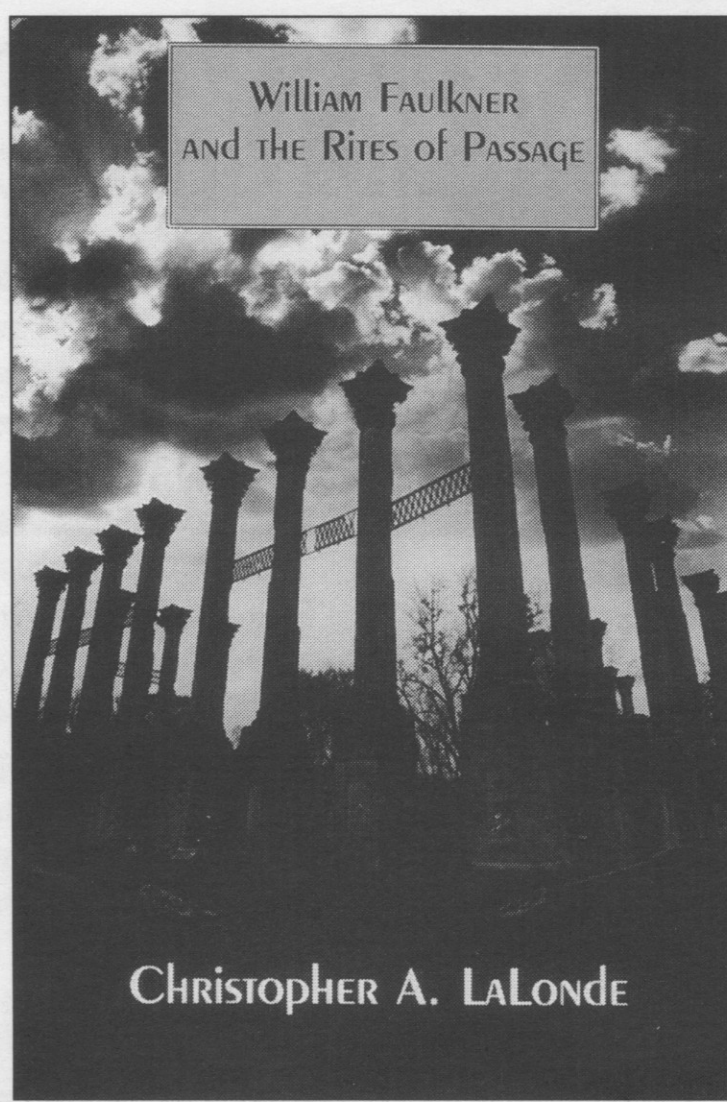
New study of Rites of Passage by Christopher A. LaLonde is included on this quarter's Checklist:

The Faulkner Journal, Vol. IX, Nos. 1 & 2 (Fall 1993/Spring 1994; published Fall 1995). Susan V. Donaldson, guest editor. Special Issue on Faulkner and Sexuality. Essays by Lisa Rado, Minrose C. Gwin, Meryl Altman, Amy Lovell Strong, Evelyn Jaffe Schreiber, Amy Louise Wood, Neil Watson, Cathy Peppers, Doreen Fowler, Jay Watson, and Donaldson. Subscription rates for *FJ* are \$12 a year for individuals and \$18 for libraries inside the continental U.S., Mexico and Canada; for all other foreign or overseas subscribers, \$19 for individuals, \$25 for institutions. To subscribe, order back issues, or submit manuscripts, contact Dawn Trouard, Leigh Hall 204B, University of Akron, Akron, Ohio 44325-1913.

LaLonde, Christopher A. *William Faulkner and the Rites of Passage*. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1996. LaLonde examines Faulkner's early fiction and "traces the evolution of rites of passage as narrative strategy and as a thematic concern" in the author's work from the start of his career as a fiction writer through the writing of *Light in August*. It was then, in February 1932, that Faulkner "put down his pen, and turned his attention to the various pursuits that prohibited the completion of a new novel [Pylon] for nearly three years." The study embraces " 'New Orleans' and an Aesthetics of Indeterminacy," "Mosquitoes and the Rites of Passage: Making Space and Time," "As I Lay Dying: The Economization of Loss," and "Light in August: Identity, Ideology, and Interpretation." LaLonde is an associate professor of English at North Carolina Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount. 178 pp. \$25.

Teaching Faulkner, No. 8, Fall 1995. Robert W. Hamblin, editor; Charles A. Peek, associate editor. Contributors are Chris Bradley, Tivy High School, Kerrville, Texas; Pamela S. Saur, Lamar University; and Alan Thomas and Shannon Donoghue, Conestoga High School, Berwyn, Penn. *Teaching Faulkner* is published twice a year by the Center for Faulkner Studies at Southeast Missouri State University.

Yorifugi, Michio. "A Study of Sanctuary: A Pistol vs. A Book." *The Tsuru University Review*, Tsuru, Japan, No. 43, Sept. 27, 1995. Professor Yorifugi writes that the essay, in Japanese, focuses on Popeye and Horace Benbow, looking into "what Faulkner wished to describe when he was deeply considering the complicated conflicts among the various values of the modern American society and its very tragic and ironical aspects."



Ernest Hemingway On William Faulkner

Students of Ernest Hemingway on the subject of William Faulkner know that the former had some right interesting things to say about the latter. There was some ridicule, but more memorable is Hemingway's appreciation of Faulkner. Faulkner shows up several times in *Conversations with Ernest Hemingway*, edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli and published by University Press of Mississippi:

- Mary Harrington in "They Call Him Papa," reprinted from the *New York Post Week-End Magazine*, Dec. 28, 1946: Hemingway is "almost afraid of flattery and seems shy about it." Please don't say that unless you mean it, he tells the person who would compliment him. And he disagrees with the critics who call him the greatest living American writer. History probably will prove him wrong, but he'll take Faulkner any day, he says. "William Faulkner is the best living."

- Edward Stafford in "An Afternoon with Hemingway," from *Writer's Digest*, December 1944: "My wife needed him. 'Is it true,' she asked, 'that you take a pitcher of martinis up into the tower every morning when you go up to write?' 'Jeezus Christ! Papa was incredulous. 'Have you ever heard of anyone who drank while he worked? You're thinking of Faulkner. He does sometime—and I can tell right in the middle of a page when he's had his first one. Besides,' he added, 'who in hell would mix more than one martini at a time, anyway?'"

- Robert Manning in "Hemingway in Cuba," from the *Atlantic Monthly*, August 1965: "...Hemingway had agreed to be interviewed on the occasion of his Nobel award, but he resisted at first because one of the magazines I worked with had recently published a penetrating article on William Faulkner. 'You guys cut him to pieces, to pieces,' Hemingway said. 'No, it was a good piece,' I said, 'and it would have been even better if Faulkner had seen the writer.' ... 'Bring a

Architecture Study Of Faulkner Country Coming in July

A new perspective on Faulkner's world is coming this summer with publication of *William Faulkner and the Tangible Past: The Architecture of Yoknapatawpha*, by Thomas S. Hines. The author's assessment "of the impact of the built environment on Faulkner's consciousness," showing how fictional Yoknapatawpha architecture mirrors the actual architecture of Oxford and the area, is scheduled for July publication by University of California Press.

Hines is a professor at UCLA where he teaches cultural, urban, and architectural history and holds a joint appointment in the Departments of History and Architecture. He is originally from Oxford, where he attended the University of Mississippi as an undergraduate. His father's family was from Ripley, Miss., where there were kinship, friendship and business ties with the family of Col. W. C. Falkner, Faulkner's great-grandfather.

Hines, who has conducted the town and county architecture tours of Faulkner country at annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conferences, will take readers of his new work on similar tours with "cultural, intellectual, architectural, and literary history" that is complemented by more than 110 color and black-and-white photos, UCP notes in its Fall 1996 catalogue.

"Arguing that nature and architecture are of equal importance in Faulkner's cosmos, Hines examines the writer's use of architectural modes—primitive, classical, gothic, and modern—to demarcate caste and class, to convey mood and ambience, and to delineate character," UCP reports. "Hines provides not only another way of understanding Faulkner's work but also a means of appreciating the power of architecture to reflect what

heavy sweater, and we'll go out on the boat,' he said. 'I'll explain to Mary that

THE FAULKNER NEWSLETTER
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William Boozer

Editor

Dean Faulkner Wells
and Lawrence Wells

Publishers

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Homage To Faulkner

Newt Gingrich looks for
angry votes;
Ergo, he hammers welfare
folks.
There lie his Presidential
hopes:
Apotheosis of the Snopes.

— Norman Mailer

(From *The New Yorker*, Dec. 11, 1995, reprinted by permission)

Faulkner called 'the comedy and tragedy of being alive.'"

Faulkner and the Tangible Past will be published in hardback only, at \$30.

you're coming down to cut me up and feed me to William Faulkner.'"

"A William Faulkner newsletter could easily be absolutely dreadful and pretentious. It is in your hands, readable plus being lively and informative..."

—Ben Wasson

"*Faulkner Newsletter* just arrived and I want to tell you what a fine job you've done with it. Difficult to do but you certainly did it!"

—Carvel Collins

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Faulkner Monument at Ripley



AN EIGHT-FOOT STATUE of Col. W.C. Falkner, carved from Carrara marble, presides over the Falkner family plot in the Ripley, Miss. cemetery. Henry Falkner's grave is to the Old Colonel's right. "He stood on a stone pedestal, in his frock coat and bareheaded, one leg slightly advanced and one hand resting lightly on the stone pylon beside him," Falkner's great-grandson wrote in *Sartoris* of the effigy of Colonel John Sartoris. "His head was lifted a little in that gesture of haughty pride which repeated itself generation after generation with a fateful fidelity, his back to the world and his carven eyes gazing out across the valley where his railroad ran, and the blue changeless hills beyond, and beyond that, the ramparts of infinity itself." This photo of the iron-fenced plot was made in the late 1950s by William Boozer.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The 24th Annual Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference

"Faulkner at 100: Retrospect and Prospect"

The University of Mississippi • July 27 - August 1, 1997

In celebration of the centennial of Faulkner's birth, the conference will focus both on the present situation of Faulkner studies and its future. On the one hand, what is the position of Faulkner in American and Southern literature and culture? What constitutes his importance? What are the texts that make him necessary, and how should we read them? In a word, why Faulkner? On the other hand, what are the issues that scholars and critics need to address? Is there a Faulkner still to emerge, and what are his defining qualities? What is likely to be, what *should* be, the directions of further discussion?

Authors whose papers are selected for presentation at the conference will receive (1) a waiver of the conference registration fee, (2) lodging at the University Alumni House from Sunday, July 27, through Friday, August 1, and (3) reimbursement of travel expenses within the continental United States (\$.30 a mile by automobile, or tourist-class air fare). Papers presented at the conference will be published by the University Press of Mississippi.

The 14th edition of the University of Chicago *Manual of Style* should be used as a guide in preparing manuscripts (3,000 to 6,000 words). Three copies of manuscripts must be submitted by January 15, 1997. Notification of selection will be made by March 1, 1997. Manuscripts and inquiries about papers should be addressed to Dr. Donald Kartiganer, Department of English, The University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677; telephone: 601-232-5793.

Henry Falkner Rescued From Linen Closet by His Great-Great-Niece

(From Page 1)

submitted them to no other magazine) she canceled that subscription as well.

Books were also stacked everywhere. Jack's law books, John Wesley Thompson Falkner's collection of his father William Clark Falkner's writings, Murry's beloved Zane Grey novels, and Nanie's *own* prodigious and eclectic accumulation of whodunits, Rupert Brooke and Conrad. (When she died, *Lady Chatterly's Lover* was on her bedside table.)

All about the attic were WWI and WWII uniforms, boots, and carefully folded woolen blankets and clothes, worn beyond use to anyone except Nanie, who no doubt planned to dye them, cut them into strips and weave them into the throw-rugs she made by the dozens. There were small shoeboxes which held tiny baby shoes of fine worn leather, locks of hair tied with ribbon from each of her sons. And there were manuscripts and galley proofs of their works.

Downstairs, her closets presented an equal challenge for her descendants. They were filled with autographed books of her sons "Billy" and "Johnsy." Wooden chests and trunks were packed with letters from children and grandchildren, postmarked from all over the world. (Jack wrote his mother on a weekly basis, making sure the letters arrived in the Friday post, whether he was in the Argonne Forest, Mexico or Alaska. He rarely missed a Friday.)

In the right-hand drawer of her marble-topped dresser, we found a cigar box containing the Nobel Prize medallion, foreign coins and rocks that two generations of children had brought her over the years. She called it her odds-and-ends box.

In the bottom drawer of the kitchen safe, we found many balls of string, all weights and lengths, which she had rolled by hand. Along with them were smaller silver balls of tinfoil. Although she refused to allow anyone to chew gum in her house ("If you want to look like a cow, go out and stand in the grass.") she would occasionally give us a nickel to buy a package of Doublemint if we would agree to separate the tinfoil from the paper and bring it to her.

It was impossible to go through everything. There was too much. We simply gave up. Some years later, when I was home on a visit, I was helping my mother clean out the linen closet in one of the bathrooms. I noticed a canvas propped up in the back, facing the wall. There was no question he was a Faulkner. The handsome, chiseled features, wide forehead, aquiline nose and aristocratic presence were unmistakable. My mother remembered Nanie having told her the portrait was of Henry.

The painting must have belonged to my great-great grandfather (the "Old Colonel") William Clark Falkner, in Ripley, Miss., and was brought to Oxford by his son, John Wesley Thompson Falkner (the "Young Colonel").

I'm not sure whether anyone outside the family has ever seen the face of my great-great-uncle, William Henry Falkner. His prodigality, gambling and philandering are a matter of public record, however. The world knows of Henry's premature death at the hands of a jealous husband in Ripley. Perhaps Nanie thought his picture was best forgotten and stuck it in the back of the linen closet, though, of course, nothing—not even *Henry*—was to be thrown away.

William Henry Falkner was born on Aug. 1, 1853, the Old Colonel's first child by his second wife, Lizzie Vance. Henry grew up spoiled and headstrong. He seemed to have inherited only his father's love of adventure. W.C. Falkner had served as a colonel in the Confederate States Army and after the war built and operated the first railroad in north Mississippi. He sent Henry off to school at Washington College (now Washington and Lee University) where he took courses in law and moral philosophy and became notorious for his gambling and rowdiness. The accidental death of a fellow student, who fell off a balcony while wrestling with Henry, resulted in his suspension and he returned home. Before long he got into trouble with the pretty wife of a crippled jeweler. Colonel Falkner twice packed the prodigal off to school in Texas. Instead of enrolling for classes, however, Henry in time gambled away the tuition money and resumed his affair back in Ripley with the jeweler's wife. It was only a matter of time before the jeweler caught them together and shot Henry dead.

According to legend, the jeweler approached W.C. Falkner and said, "Colonel, I hate to have to tell you this, but I had to kill Henry."

Colonel Falkner reflected for a moment and replied, "That's all right. I'm afraid I would have had to do it myself, anyway."

William Henry Falkner expired on January 5, 1878, at age 24, and is buried in the family plot in the Ripley cemetery. Engraved on his tombstone is his Christian name, "Henry," as if that was all Colonel Falkner felt was necessary.

Nanie fully agreed. When their last son was born, her husband Murry tried unsuccessfully to get Maud to accept the name, Henry. She replied, "*Never*. We've had more than enough Henrys in this family, already."

They named the child Dean. (Had they not, my name would no doubt be Henrietta.)

Henry's portrait is dry and cracked, its condition affected by humidity as well, but the time has come for him to emerge from the linen closet.

(Continued Page 4)

Ole Miss Library Receives Howorth Copy of Marble Faun

Lucy Somerville Howorth of Cleveland, Miss., who knew Faulkner when she was earning a degree in law at the University of Mississippi and he was serving as Ole Miss postmaster, has donated her and her husband's copy of *The Marble Faun* to the University's J.D. Williams Library.

Dr. Thomas Verich, University archivist, said the recent donation came following Judge Howorth's 100th birthday. It brings to five the number of copies of Faulkner's first book in Special Collections at Ole Miss.

Judge Howorth, who was born in Greenville, Miss., and had earned a bachelor of arts degree from Randolph-Macon College, was active with Faulkner in *The Marionettes*, a campus drama group, during her years at Ole Miss. She was president of the group in 1922, the year she received her law degree. Faulkner, who had served with *The Marionettes* in various capacities including property man, is listed as an honorary member in the 1922 Ole Miss yearbook (Vol. XXVI).



Lucy Somerville at Ole Miss, 1922

During her years at Ole Miss, Lucy Somerville served also on the staff of *The Mississippian*, the student newspaper, during a period when Faulkner was an occasional contributor with reviews and poems, was historian of her junior law class, and a member of the Blackstone Law Club, The Ravens, and the Student Legislative Council.

Judge Howorth, in a February 1975 letter in which she placed an order for *William Faulkner's First Book: The Marble Faun Fifty Years Later*, a census of known copies published by William Boozer, said the copy owned by her and her husband, Joseph M. Howorth, was not signed by Faulkner.

"Unfortunately we never asked Faulkner to autograph it—that is if we planned to sell it, which we do not," Judge Howorth wrote.

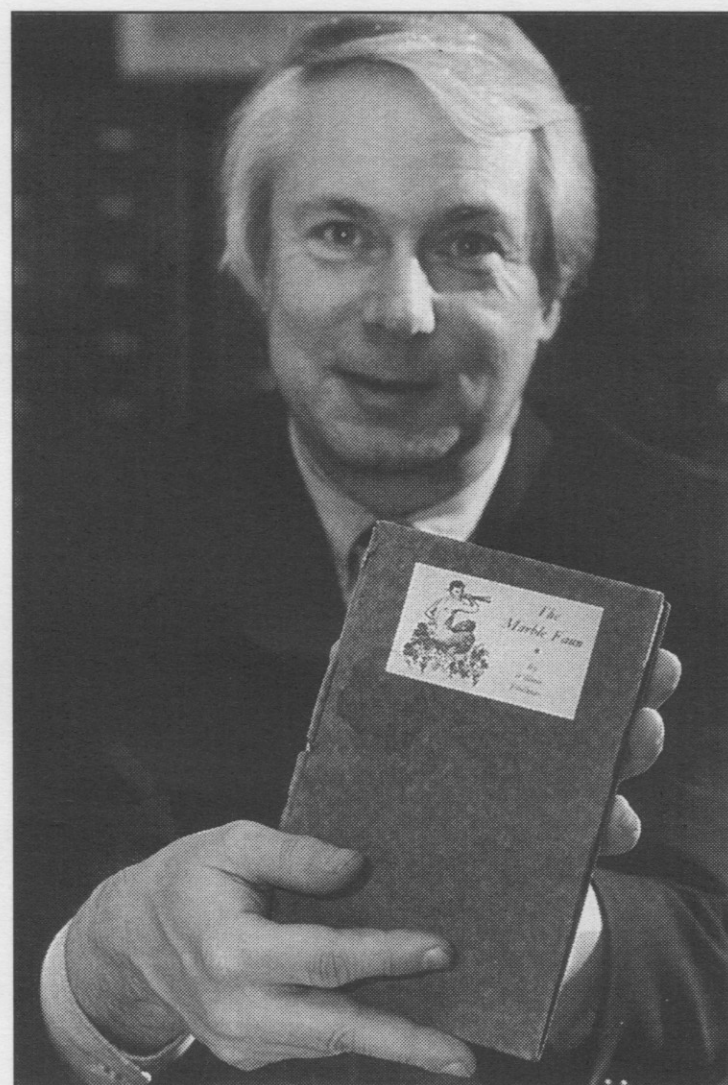
In another letter to Boozer later that month, she said reading *Fifty Years Later* "brings to mind people, places and other times."

"Mr. Howorth's recollection is a bit hazy as to when and where he purchased *Faun*," she wrote. "He thinks he purchased it at the Baptist Book Store [in Jackson, Miss.], where Louis Cochran purchased his copy, or at a newsstand on Capitol Street which had second hand books and odds and ends of reading matter. He is sure he did not pay more than one dollar, since money was in short supply in 1925. The book was in mint condition.

"We were married in 1928 and the *Faun* was kept in a book case with glass doors. When we moved to Washington in the Thirties we stored our books with several kind relatives. In the Forties Mr. Howorth made a short visit to Jackson and checked one of the storage rooms and finding it damp, selected a few books to bring back with him to Washington, among them the *Faun*. It was in good condition, [but] the jacket had been chewed upon and was soiled. Jackets had no especial value in my eyes and the condition of the jacket was rather offensive, so one day off it came and down the incinerator it went. To my shocked regret when I realized 20 years later what I had destroyed!"

Dr. Verich, who puts the value of the Howorth copy of the book of poems at about \$10,000, said Judge Howorth had also donated to the Library a copy, printed by the Delta Council and bound in green wrappers, of Faulkner's 1952 speech to the Council, valued at about \$2,000.

Faun to Ole Miss



SPECIAL COLLECTIONS at the University of Mississippi's J.D. Williams Library is recipient of another copy, its fifth, of Faulkner's first book, *The Marble Faun*, published by Four Seas Co. in Boston on Dec. 15, 1924. University Archivist Thomas Verich holds the new acquisition, a gift from Judge Lucy Somerville Howorth of Cleveland, Miss., a friend of Faulkner's during their Ole Miss days in the 1920s.

Henry Rescued

(From Page 3)

In Nanie's house there are so many oil paintings by her and other artists that the only available wall space is in the front bathroom, where today Uncle Henry politely stares off into the ramparts of infinity.

(Dean Faulkner Wells, co-publisher of *The Faulkner Newsletter*, is the daughter of Louise and Dean Faulkner and niece of William Faulkner.)

These Dealer Prices Noted Recently in AB Bookman's Weekly

Browsing for Faulkner in some recent issues of AB Bookman's Weekly has turned up these offerings:

- *Dr. Martino and Other Stories*. NY, 1934. One of 360 signed, numbered copies. In custom slipcase. Condition fine. \$1,800. Charles Parkhurst Books, Inc., Prescott, AZ.
- *Light in August*. First edition. NY, 1932. Very good-plus. \$150. Stephen Lupack, South Meriden, CT.
- *Requiem for a Nun*. First edition. NY, 1951. Good/Poor copy, in dust jacket. \$85. Ron Hoyt, Glen Cove, NY.
- *The Portable Faulkner*. NY: Viking Press, 1946. Edited by Malcolm Cowley. First edition. Yellow cloth. Fine. \$55. Book & Tackle Shop, Chestnut Hill, MA.
- *Flags in the Dust*. First edition. NY, 1973. \$30. Books Revisited, San Rafael, CA.
- "Spotted Horses." *Scribner's* magazine, June 1931. Light soiling to spine. \$20. The Book Stall of Rockford, Rockford, IL.
- Signed Faulkner document. MGM contract for "Turn About," filmed as "Today We live." 1932. \$4,500. Houle Rare Books and Autographs, Los Angeles, CA.
- *White Rose of Memphis*, by Col. William C. Falkner. NY, 1953. Very good, in VG dust jacket, \$40. Bicentennial Bookshop, Kalamazoo, MI.

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