

# Inspiration & Perspiration FLORIDA - Land of the Storyteller

Not all books are literary wonders but Florida has been blessed by the works of Walt Whitman (*Osceola*) and for inspiring the poetic muse of Ralph Waldo Emerson. More modern writers include Gainesville resident and acclaimed Young Adult author, Nancy Yi Fan (*Swordbird*). She has already had two books on the *New York Times* Top-10 list and she's still in high school (2011).

Elders were telling stories to new generations as soon as they could communicate. Not all the tales were about deeds of derring do and fierce fights with sabre-toothed tigers. Many were more practical: where to hew wood, how to make a fire, and when to sow seeds.

One of Florida's best known writers, born in Orange Park, Clay County, would never make it onto the Pulitzer Prize short-list of candidates. But former *Miami Herald* writer/editor Nixon Smiley (a colleague of Al Burt and fellow U.S. Marine) captured a wide audience of readers with his book, *Florida Land of Images*. He also entertained and instructed newcomers to the Sunshine State in the fine art and craft required to grow plants, flowers, and vegetables in his book, *Florida Gardening Month By Month*.

A writer of history, also from Clay County, was Kevin S. Hooper, whose recording of the Civil War in *Images of America* in prose and pictures garnered from archives of the past entertains and educates today's readers.

The mobility of readers and writers and the many forms of communication, from handwritten manuscripts (SciFi writer Joe Haldeman uses one of many fountain pens in his collection) to keyboard and voice-activated electronic devices, cause many "border" crossings.

Putnam County's "One Book, One Putnam" annual event -- which gets all area residents on the same page -- selected the historic novel, *The Barefoot Mailman*, by (Palm Beach County) writer Theodore Pratt, one year. Most recently, readers have delved into the writings of Jacksonville (Duval County) resident Charles Martin, whose novel, *Wrapped in Rain*, is a story based in Alabama but with universal appeal.

This map, for Melrose visitors, will hopefully provide a guide to readers and writers alike to the rich writing heritage Florida has evoked.



**Debora M. Coty**  
*Mom Needs Chocolate* An inspirational and motivational writer and presenter with a vivacious sense of humor. She is also an occupational therapist, former piano teacher, and freelance writer.



**Reid Tillery**  
*Surviving the Wilds of Florida*  
A Florida outdoorsman who teaches and writes about skills for safety and survival in Florida's wild places.



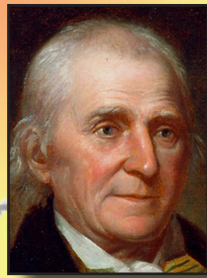
**Victor "Vic" DiGenti**  
*Windrusher Adventures*  
A quest by a cat with mystical abilities to rejoin his family, and the adventures he and fellow felines encounter.



**Kevin M. McCarthy**  
*St Johns River Guidebook*  
Prolific author of Florida, and other books, professor of English. He teaches at Gainesville and sometimes summers aboard cruise ships touring the Greek islands.



**William "Bill" Kerr**  
*Mark of the Devil* Creator of the serial adventures of special agent Matt Berkeley, by former U.S.N. Captain Kerr.



**William Bartram**  
*Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, the Cherokee County etc.*  
An American naturalist, Bartram is noted for his vivid descriptions of the American countryside and his botanical illustrations.



**John Crawford**  
*The Last True Story I'll Ever Tell* An anthropologist, who goes to war in the early days of the Iraq conflict, as a student and National Guardsman, tells all. A national best-seller.



## LOCAL HISTORIES

**Welaka 1853-1935** booklet compiled by Mati Bell Reeder from records and recollections. Includes eyewitness accounts of Civil War conflict on the St. Johns River and slave reactions.

**Bonnie Melrose** (part of a trilogy) a record of the community by Zonira Hunter Tolles. The family home is now a homelike community bank.

**Interlachen Memories** Lynn and Mary Lou Dawson. A project of the town's historical society, comprised of stories, anecdotes, deeds, court records, and photographs gleaned from accumulated memorabilia and artifacts.

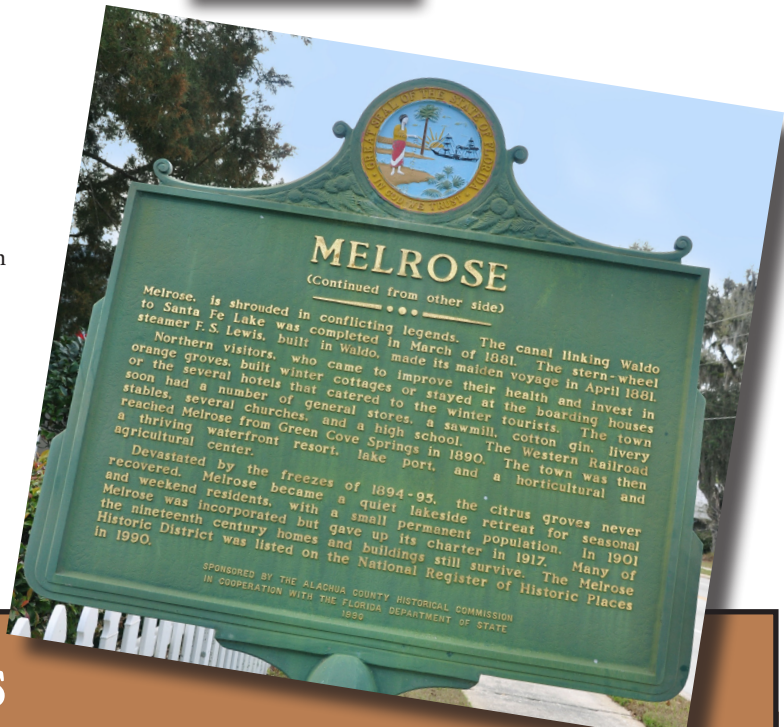
**Poet Laureate** New England rambler Robert Frost was a frequent Melrose visitor and part-time resident of the community until he opted to call Key West his home away from home.

*"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less travelled by,  
And that has made all the difference."  
- from The Road Not Taken (1916)  
by Robert Frost*



Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings seated at a table in her yard, 1952, age 56. Photo by Erich Hartmann. Courtesy: Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Papers, Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.

**Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings**  
*The Yearling* Her best-known creation, which won a Pulitzer Prize for fiction, was conceived in the wilderness area of Alachua at Cross Creek, between Gainesville and Palatka, on the cusp of World War Two. Its theme of pioneer survival in an era of depression and the conflict between a boy's love for an orphaned fawn, and his father's need for meat for the table, struck a nerve. Her tumultuous life and conflicts with neighbors in the heart of "Cracker" country have generated many books.



## Literary Luminaries

**Edward F. Roberts** *Andersonville Journey* A history of the prison which became infamous for its treatment of Civil War POW's.

**John "Jody" Delzell** *The Moving Finger Writes* Columnist and former publisher of the *Palatka Daily News* and creator of the mythical (skunk ape) *Bardin Booger*.

**JoAnne Ducote Smith** *The Legend of Sally and the Pink Marble Stone* Fictionalized account of a local Putnam mystery.

**Jeffery Lamb** *Save The Gator Queen* A Young Adult (teenager) adventure by a Floridian. Born with a (mild) case of cerebral palsy, the author donates part of book sale proceeds to UCP (United Cerebral Palsy) of Central Florida.

**Lynette L. Walther** *Florida Gardening on the Go* and *The Art of Catching and Cooking Crabs* Multi-tasking writer covers the ground as well as the waterfront in her output.

**Lillian Kiernan Brown** *Banned in Boston: Memoirs of a Stripper* The spritely freelance writer and columnist for local newspapers was once a performer in burlesque. Her story has been made into a movie, shown on cable-TV.

**MSGT Thomas Kaye** *S.A.C. Great Years* Memoirs of a life in service, first the US Navy then the US Air Force (Strategic Air Command), in a "not politically correct" recollection from teens through 20 years.

**Jack Owen** *Palm Beach Scandals - The First 100 Years* A glimpse into the private lives of movers, shakers, and headline-makers who have occupied life in the lap of luxury.

**David Warner** *Vanishing Florida: A Personal Guide to Sights Rarely Seen* Author, movie-maker, entrepreneur and founder of the Bellamy Road Gallery, Melrose.

**Meredith Ann Pierce** *The Firebird Trilogy* Fantasy Young Adult author who leads a mild-mannered life as a librarian within Alachua County's library system. She also writes short stories for adults, and favors singing plus playing the harp.



**Joe Haldeman** *The Forever War* Hugo and Nebula Award winning SciFi writer whose experience and injuries sustained during combat in the Vietnam conflict provide an authentic background to much of his writing. He is an adjunct professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he teaches writing in the fall.

**Stetson Kennedy** *The Klan Unmasked* Author, folklorist, environmentalist, labor activist, and human rights advocate. Woodie Guthrie wrote songs while staying with him at the Kennedy home at Beluthatchee by Fruit Cove on the banks of the St. Johns River. He was also known for his infiltration of the Ku Klux Klan during the 1940's.

**Robert R. Jones** *Florida Ghost Stories* was born in Archer, Florida, and spent most of his life in Jacksonville. Retired from the Department of Corrections, he now lives in Starke.

**r.c. Alexander** *Unfamiliar Magic* A Young Adult author from the chilly state of Minnesota, via California, who now resides in the Sunshine State on a secluded 20-acre site where he built his own home.

**Harry Crews** *A Childhood: The Biography of a Place* Gritty real and fictional stories by a master of the genre who also taught his craft, after serving in the US Marines in Korea.

**Mel Sunquist** is professor emeritus of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at the University of Florida, Gainesville and is the author of *Wildcats of the World*.

**Fiona Sunquist** is a science writer and photographer, and for fifteen years was a roving editor for *International Wildlife Magazine*. Together, she and husband Mel are the authors of *Florida: The Ecotravellers' Wildlife Guide* and *Tiger Moon*.