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***Cross Creek Kitchens: Seasonal Recipes and Reflections* by Sally Morrison**

Andrew T. Huse
University of South Florida

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greatest architects of the early modern era, as well as a lucid account of the evolution of the most acclaimed multibuilding design intervention of Wright's career.

THEODORE TRENT GREEN
University of South Florida

Cross Creek Kitchens: Seasonal Recipes and Reflections. 2nd ed. By Sally Morrison. Illustrations by Kate Barnes. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011. 224 pp. Prologue, recipe contents, illustrations, index. \$24.95, cloth.)

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings left behind a treasure trove of writings about Florida. Among the most illuminating of her books was *Cross Creek Cookery*, a cookbook with charming tales and anecdotes about Florida living and cooking. She also left behind her house at Cross Creek, made famous by her novel of the same name.

As caretaker of Rawlings's Cross Creek estate in the 1980s, Sally Morrison found the home lacking in amenities but not in charm. Inspired in part by Rawlings's legacy, Morrison penned her own cookbook in 1983 called *Cross Creek Kitchens: Seasonal Recipes and Reflections*.

Morrison and the artist Kate Barnes collaborated on the book, motivated in part by visitors' nostalgia for simple country living. According to the back cover's text, "their book features southern fare and local favorite recipes interlaced with stories of life in the small community made famous by Rawlings." They also hoped to provide an updated version of Florida cuisine for today's nutritional sensibilities: "Marjorie's cookbook emphasized 'company fare—on the rich side and not recommended for daily consumption.' Aware of the modern inclination for low-calorie, natural foods, we offer this lighter, more contemporary version of Florida country cooking as a companion to the earlier regional classic" (10).

The prose in this volume does its best to evoke Florida's seasons and local recreational activities. Morrison also highlights the social nature of food preparation and consumption, writing with a sentimental eye of quiet visits and large parties. There are breezy anecdotes about cooking and roughing it the way Rawlings did, but these stories rarely help the reader to understand the importance of certain products or preparations to life in Cross Creek. Instead, the anecdotes dwell largely on Morrison's own experience of visiting with friends and offering hospitality.

The black-and-white illustrations are competent and quaint, but mostly act as filler. The complete absence of photographs of the land or the prepared recipes themselves does nothing to make the book more appealing.

The book, in short, is a personal memoir of Cross Creek's caretaker, not a broad exploration of Florida cooking. There is little apparent influence from Rawlings

herself, let alone from her kitchen. All traces of lard and meat have been eradicated from Morrison's version of Cross Creek. Instead of down-home comfort food, a reader finds health food dressed up like country cooking.

The book fails not because Morrison wanted to create healthy recipes, but because she lost Old Florida in the process. Without a focus upon traditional Florida food, the book loses sight of the ostensible reason it was created in the first place. Reading the book, one is left wondering what the recipes have to do with Cross Creek at all. Dishes such as chilled tofu salad, miso vegetable soup, ginger stir-fry, and tabouli do little to evoke Old Florida and seem out of place.

There are also puzzling and inexplicable omissions. Neither grits nor hominy appears in the book at all. The lack of wild game is glaring and inexplicable, especially given the perennial enthusiasm for hunting in Florida. With only six recipes containing seafood, one of Florida's culinary trump cards is largely left out of play. Beef and pork are completely absent from Morrison's Cross Creek. In light of Florida's cattle industry and its robust stock of feral hogs, their omission is inexcusable. Instead, there is an abundance of recipes calling for poultry, especially chicken and turkey (although turkey, at least, can be hunted). If Morrison has dietary restrictions or aversions to hunting or grits, she never mentions it in the text.

Her cooking sensibilities are as bland as her taste in ingredients. Some recipes are superfluous, such as avocado halves (with lemon juice, olive oil, and soy sauce). Her recipe for so-called "barbecued chicken" (144) calls for boneless, skinless chicken breasts to be cut in half, poached in water, then brushed with sauce and grilled over charcoal. If Morrison had bothered to reference local practice, she would have found that grilling does not produce barbecue, that chicken with no skin or bones will produce little flavor and be prone to drying out when cooked (hence the poaching). Barbecue in the Southeast almost invariably involves pork. Chicken breasts are for Yankees and their Weber grills. Pit masters around Florida would laugh at Morrison's recipe.

In this age of Internet recipes and cooking shows, cookbooks must stake out unique niches in the market to be effective. Morrison had a potentially interesting idea with *Cross Creek Kitchens*, but she fails to connect her experiences and recipes to the traditional cooking of the Floridians she purports to describe. For a better read with authentic recipes, look to Rawlings's charming *Cross Creek Cookery*. One is left to wonder why *Cross Creek Kitchens* has been reissued at all.

ANDREW T. HUSE
University of South Florida