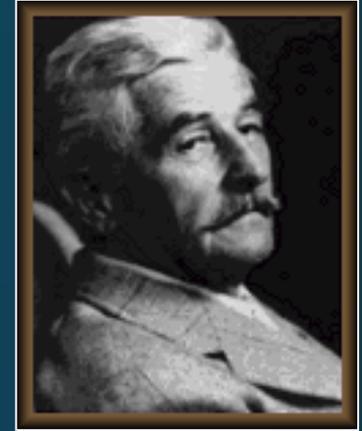


William Faulkner

# Birth



- William Cuthbert Falkner (as his name was then spelled)
- Born on September 25, 1897, in New Albany, Mississippi

# Parents and family

- Murry and Maud Butler Falkner
  - first of four sons.
- Named after his great-grandfather, William Clark Falkner, the “Old Colonel”
  - had been killed eight years earlier in a duel with his former business partner in the streets of Ripley, Mississippi.
- A few days before William’s fifth birthday, the Falkners moved to Oxford, Mississippi.

# Indifferent student

- Demonstrated artistic talent at a young age,
  - drawing and writing poetry.
- Around the sixth grade he began to grow increasingly bored with his studies.
- Finally, he dropped out of high school in 1915.

# A broken heart

- He lost his sweetheart, Estelle Oldham, to another man.
- Her family pressured her into marrying a young lawyer.



# Moves to New Haven

- Faulkner went to stay with a friend studying law at Yale in New Haven.
- There Faulkner first took a job with the Winchester Repeating Arms Company
  - for the first time, his name was spelled “Faulkner” in employee records, possibly the result of a typing error.

# RAF Cadet

- June 1918, became a cadet in training in the Royal Air Force in Canada.
- Earlier had tried to join the U.S. Army Air Force, but turned down because of his height.
- In his RAF application, he lied in an attempt to pass himself off as British. Also spelled his name "Faulkner," believing it looked more British, and in meeting with RAF officials he affected a British accent.
- Began training in Toronto, but before he finished training, the war ended. He received an honorable discharge.

# Mississippi and University

- Back in Oxford in 1919, enrolled at the University of Mississippi in Oxford under a special provision for war veterans, even though he had never graduated from high school.
- In August, his first published poem appeared in *The New Republic*.
- After three semesters of study at “Ole Miss”, he dropped out in November 1920.

# Not a very good worker

- His most notorious job during this period was his stint as postmaster in the university post office from the spring of 1922 to October 31, 1924.
- He was a terrible postmaster, spending much of his time reading or playing cards with friends, misplacing or losing mail, and failing to serve customers.
- When a postal inspector came to investigate, he agreed to resign.

# Estelle Faulkner

- In April 1929, Estelle Oldham divorced.
- In June she and Faulkner were married.
- Estelle brought to the marriage two children, Malcolm and Victoria.

# 1930 a significant year

- First, he bought a decrepit antebellum house in Oxford.
- Faulkner named the house “Rowan Oak”
  - after a Scottish legend alluding to the protective powers of wood from the rowan tree.

# Publishing Success

- First national publication of a short story, "A Rose for Emily," in *Forum* magazine.

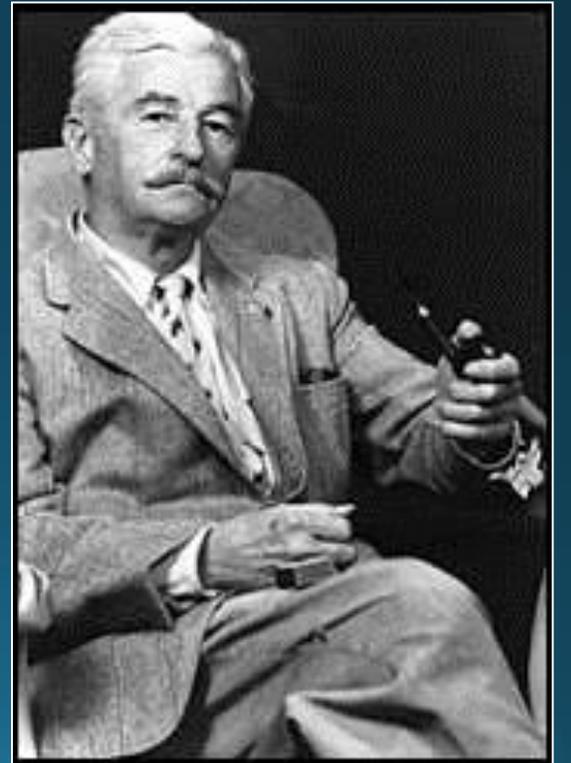


# The bitter and the sweet

- In January 1931, Estelle gave birth to a daughter, Alabama.
  - The child, born prematurely, lived only a few days.
- Faulkner's first collection of short stories, *These 13*, would be published in September and dedicated to "Estelle and Alabama."

# His death

- On July 6, 1962, Faulkner died of a heart attack.
- He was 64.



# Southern Gothic

- Faulkner refined the genre of Southern Gothic
- Literature that builds on the traditions of the larger Gothic genre, typically including supernatural elements, mental disease, and the grotesque.
- Often deals with the plight of those who are ostracized or oppressed by traditional Southern culture, especially African Americans and women.
- William Faulkner turned the dark castle settings into decaying southern plantations and the ghosts became the death of honor and nobility of tradition

# “A Rose for Emily”

- Faulkner's first short story published in a national magazine
- Originally published in *Forum Magazine*
  - April 30, 1930.

# A Rose for Emily

- Macabre

- Gruesome and horrifying
- Ghastly and horrible
- Pertaining to death

- Black/dark humor=

- Humorous effects resulting largely from grotesque, morbid, or macabre situations dealing with a horrifying and disoriented world
- Aims to shock and disorient readers, making them laugh in the face of anxiety, suffering or death