

# William Faulkner

*September 25, 1897 — July 6, 1962*



# Childhood

- ◆ Born in New Albany, Mississippi in 1897. Later moved to Oxford, Mississippi.
- ◆ Parents: Murray Charles Faulkner & Maud Butler Faulkner
- ◆ Aspired to be a writer like his great grandfather.



# Young Adulthood

- ◆ Quarterback of high school football team; never graduated.
- ◆ Studied for a time at the University of Mississippi; never graduated.
- ◆ Pilot dreams were shot down.
- ◆ Later joined the Royal Canadian Air Force and remained enlisted through WWI, but never saw flying time in combat.



# Personal & Professional Experiences

- ◆ Odd jobs
- ◆ Married his childhood sweetheart, Estelle Oldham
- ◆ Hollywood career
- ◆ Nobel Peace Prize for Literature
- ◆ Extramarital affairs
- ◆ Writer-in-Residence at the University of Virginia
- ◆ Suffered serious injuries in a horseback riding accident



# Death

- ◆ Faulkner died on July 6, 1962, of a heart attack at Wright's Sanitarium in Byhalia, Mississippi. He was 64.



# Writing

- ◆ From the early 1920s to WWII, Faulkner published 13 novels and a plethora of short stories.
  - ◆ Driven by need for money
  - ◆ Includes *the Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying*, *Light in August*, and *Absalom! Absalom!*



# Literary Movements

## ◆ Southern Gothic

- ◆ Deeply flawed, disturbing, or eccentric characters
- ◆ Decayed or derelict settings
- ◆ Grotesque situations
- ◆ Sinister events relating to or coming from poverty

## ◆ Regionalism

- ◆ Literature about specific geographical areas
- ◆ Present a distinct culture of an area



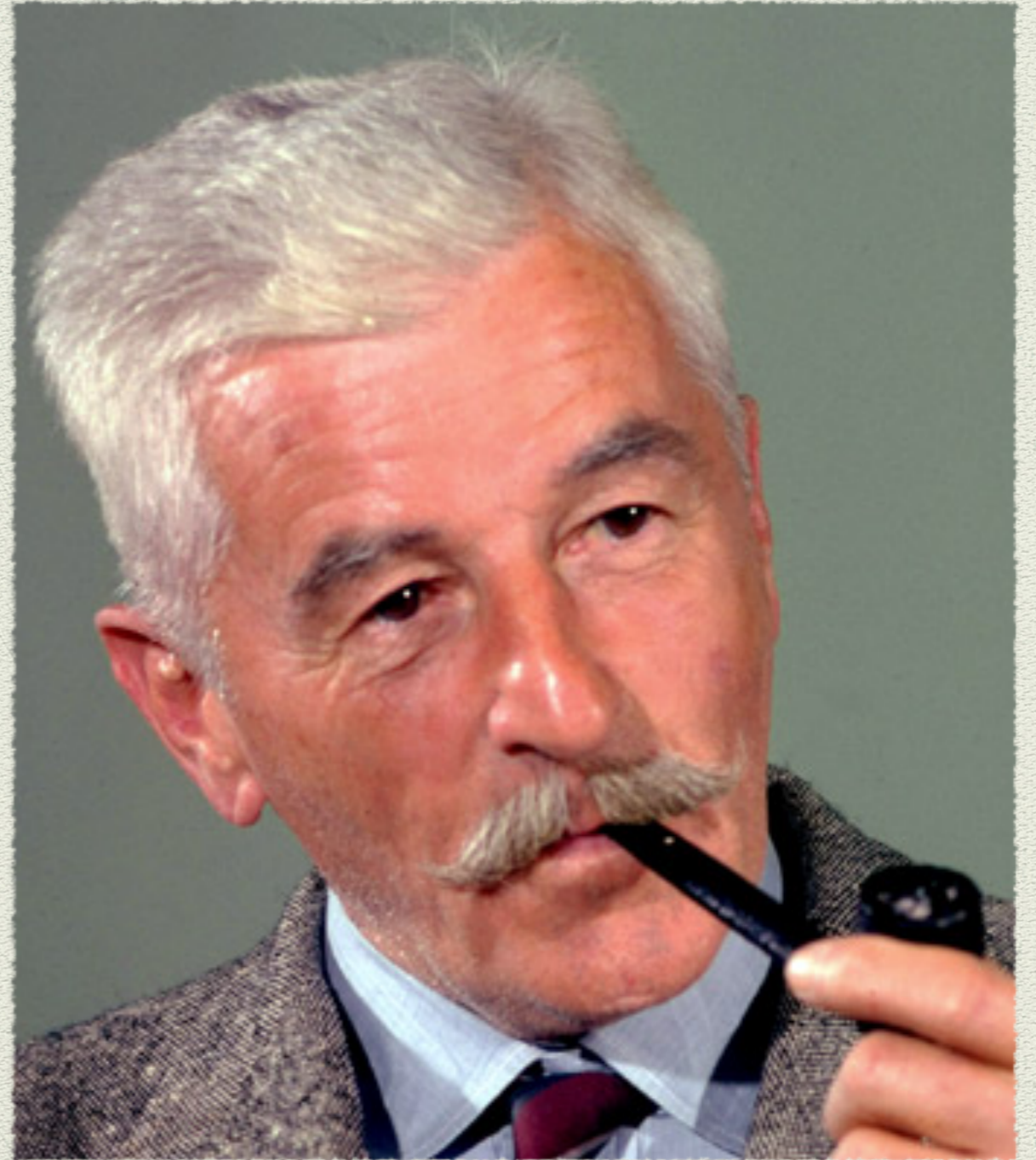
# Literary Movements

- ◆ **American Modernism (1915-1946)**
  - ◆ An age of disillusionment and confusion
  - ◆ Race relations
  - ◆ Gender roles
  - ◆ Sexuality



# Writing Influences

- ◆ Residency
- ◆ Southern social dynamics
- ◆ Architecture
- ◆ Personal life and fantasies
- ◆ Historical growth and subsequent decadence of the South





# Yoknapatawpha County

Beginning with Colonel Sartoris, Faulkner in his fiction imagines a Mississippi county named Yoknapatawpha.

Most of his stories trace the fortunes of several families, including the aristocratic Compsons and Sartorises as well as the "white-trash, dollar-grabbing" Snopes, from the Civil War to modern times.





Surveyed & mapped for this volume by

WILLIAM FAULKNER



# About Yoknapatawpha

- ◆ Faulkner often referred to it as "my apocryphal county."
- ◆ Name derived from two Chikasaw words: "yocona" and "petopha" — "split land."
  - ◆ Faulkner claimed to a University of Virginia audience that it meant "water flows slow through flat land."
  - ◆ Was the original name of the actual Yocona River.



# Works to be Explored

- ◆ "Barn Burning"





# Things to Consider While Reading

- ◆ Yoknapatawpha County and what it represented to Faulkner
- ◆ Racial prejudice
- ◆ Class divisions
- ◆ Family units
- ◆ Sentence structure
- ◆ Withholding of information
- ◆ Stream of consciousness
- ◆ Various forms of points of view
- ◆ Time shifts within the narration
- ◆ The grotesque