



WILLIAM FAULKNER

Absalom, Absalom!



VINTAGE FAULKNER

Absalom! Absalom!

“He is the greatest artist the South has produced.... Indeed, through his many novels and short stories, Faulkner fights out the moral problem which was repressed after the nineteenth century [yet] for all his concern with the South, Faulkner was actually seeking out the nature of man. Thus we must turn to him for that continuity of moral purpose which made for the greatness of our classics.”

—RALPH ELLISON



“Faulkner, more than most men, was aware of human strength as well of human weakness. He knew that the understanding and the resolution of fear are a large part of the writer’s reason for being.”

—JOHN STEINBECK



“For range of effect, philosophical weight, originality of style, variety of characterization, humor, and tragic intensity, [Faulkner’s works] are without equal in our time and country.”

—ROBERT PENN WARREN



“No man ever put more of his heart and soul into the written word than did William Faulkner. If you want to know all you can about that heart and soul, the fiction where he put it is still right there.”

—EUDORA WELTY

Absalom, Absalom!

The corrected text

WILLIAM FAULKNER

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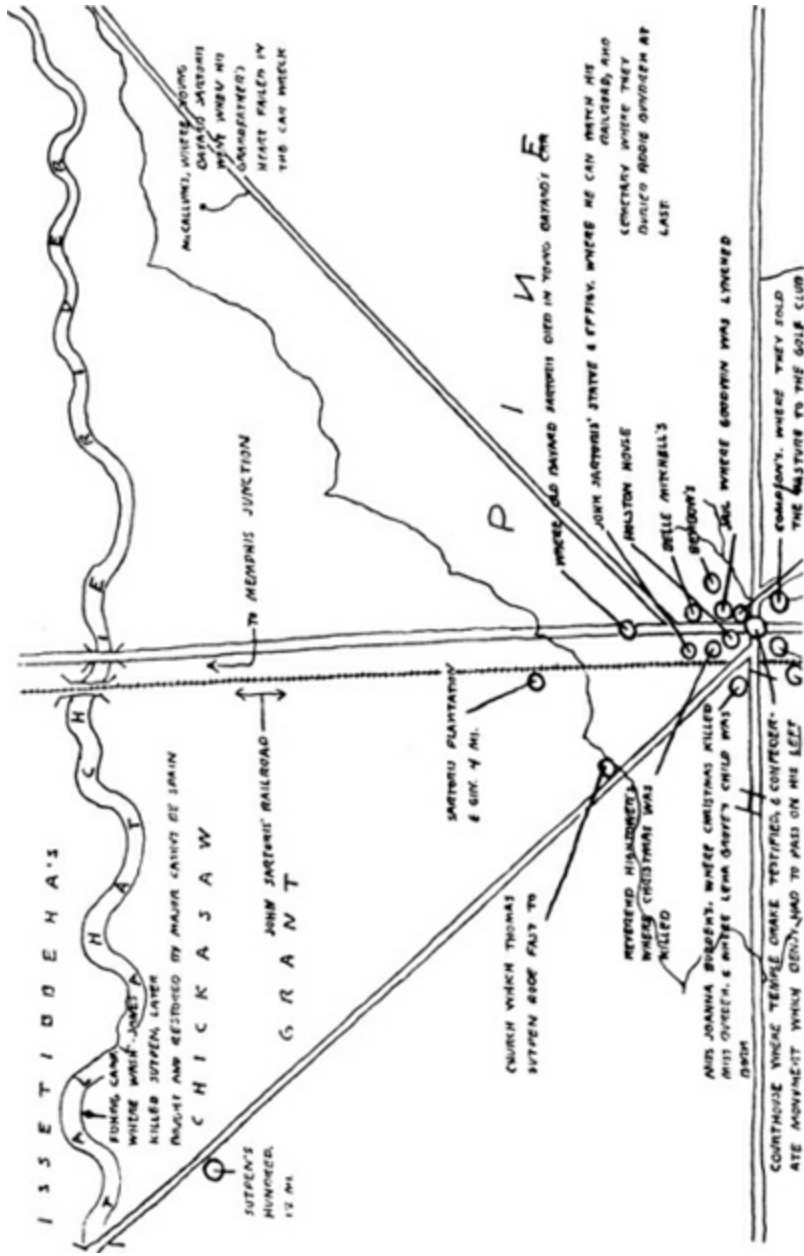
Genealogy

Editor's Note

William Faulkner (1897–1962)

Also by William Faulkner

Academic Resources for Educators



I S E T I D O E H A ' S

CHICKASAW
 SUTREN'S HUNDEE, 1 1/2 MI.
 SUTREN'S RAILROAD
 JOHN SARTORIUS RAILROAD
 SARTORIUS PLANTATION, 6 SQ. Y. MI.
 CHURCH WHICH THOMAS SUTREN BOKE FAULT TO
 REVEREND HANBERRY, WHOSE CHRISTMAS WAS KILLED
 MRS JOHANNA BROWN, WHOSE CHRISTMAS WAS KILLED
 MRS GREEN, & ANNE LENA GREFFY CHILD WAS KILLED
 COURTHOUSE WHERE TEMPLE DORSE TESTIFIED & CONFESSED - ATE MONUMENT WHICH DORSE HAD TO PASS ON HIS LEFT

MCCALLUM, WHOSE SONS OBTAINED SARTORIUS PLANTATION FROM HIS GRANDFATHER'S HEIR HEIR IN THIS CASE WHEN THE

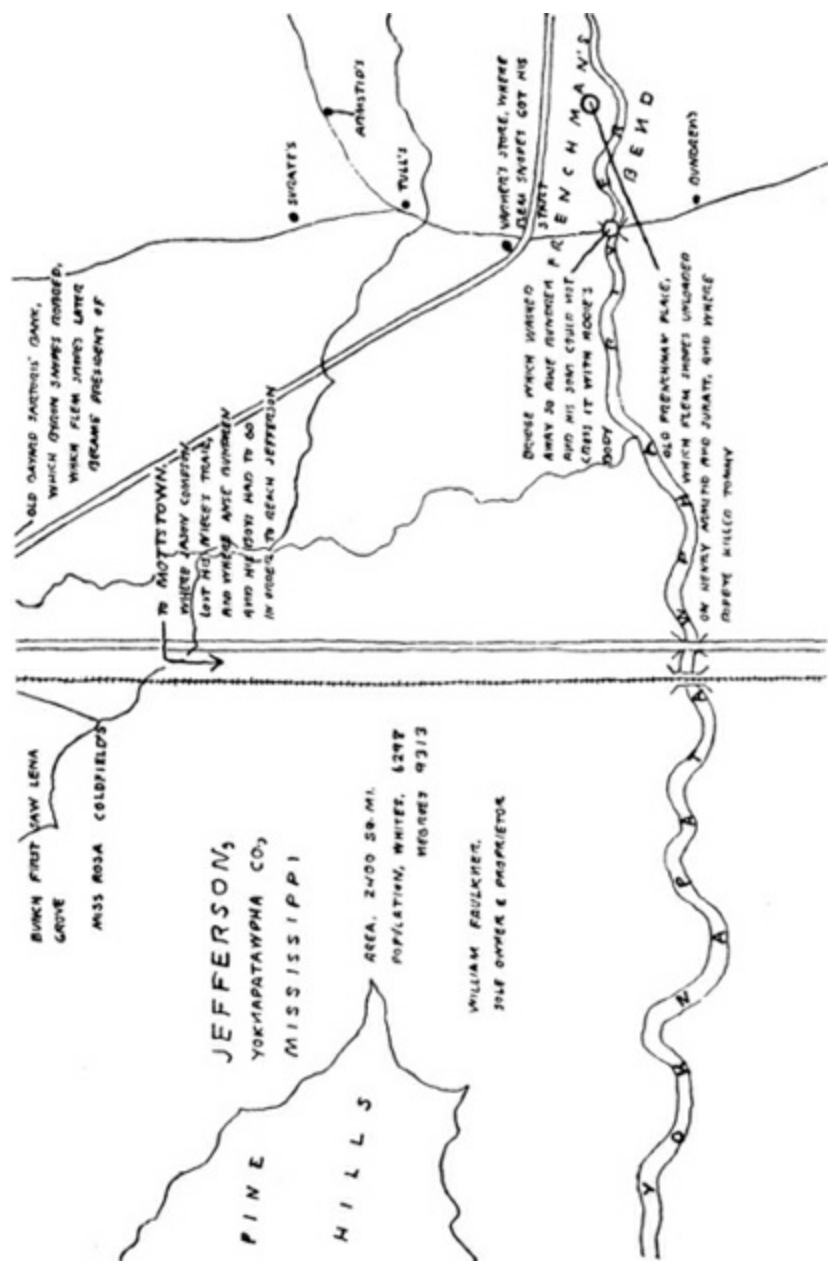
P I M E
 WHICH OLD DAVE SARTORIUS DIED IN 1840 OBTAINED FOR

JOHN SARTORIUS' STORE & OFFICE, WHERE HE CAN BE SEEN HIS DALLIED, AND LEMERTARY WHERE THEY DULICO ROSE OVERSEEN AT LAST

WELLS MITCHELL'S BROTHER'S

MIL WHERE SUTREN WAS LYING

COMPANY, WHERE THEY SOLD THE MASTERS TO THE GOLF CLUB



BUNCH FIRST SAW LENA GROVE
 MISS ROSSA COLDFIELDS

JEFFERSON,
 YORKSHIRE CO.,
 MISSISSIPPI

PINE HILLS
 AREA, 2400 SQ. MI.
 POPULATION, WHITE, 1247
 NEGROES 933

WILLIAM FRULKNER,
 TALE OWNER & PROPRIETOR

TO MOTTS TOWN,
 WHERE JIMMY CONSTON
 GOT HIS WIFE'S TRAIL,
 AND WHERE ABSE RICHMOND
 AND HIS WIFE HAD TO GO
 IN ORDER TO REAN JEFFERSON

OLD DANKED FATHERS' GARDEN,
 WHICH GROWN JAMES BORDERS,
 WHICH FLEM JAMES LATER
 BECAME PRESIDENT OF

HOUSE WHICH BURNED
 AWAY TO ONE DUNDEN F. J.
 AND HIS JANE STOLE HIS
 CLOTHES IT WITH MOORE'S
 BODY

OLD FRENCHMAN PLACE,
 WHICH FLEM JAMES UNLOCKED
 ON JERRY MOORE AND JIMMY, AND WHERE
 BUNCH KILLED TOMMY

WHERE JAMES, WHERE
 FLEM JAMES GOT HIS

ENCLAVE

DUNDEN

SHRATT'S

TULL'S

ANNISTON

From a little after two o'clock until almost sundown of the long still hot weary dead September afternoon they sat in what Miss Coldfield still called the office because her father had called it that—a dim hot airless room with the blinds all closed and fastened for forty-three summers because when she was a girl someone had believed that light and moving air carried heat and that dark was always cooler, and which (as the sun shone fuller and fuller on that side of the house) became latticed with yellow slashes full of dust motes which Quentin thought of as being flecks of the dead old dried paint itself blown inward from the scaling blinds as wind might have blown them. There was a wistaria vine blooming for the second time that summer on a wooden trellis before one window, into which sparrows came now and then in random gusts, making a dry vivid dusty sound before going away: and opposite Quentin, Miss Coldfield in the eternal black which she had worn for forty-three years now, whether for sister, father, or nothusband none knew, sitting so bolt upright in the straight hard chair that was so tall for her that her legs hung straight and rigid as if she had iron shinbones and ankles, clear of the floor with that air of impotent and static rage like children's feet, and talking in that grim haggard amazed voice until at last listening would renege and hearing-sense self-confound and the long-dead object of her impotent yet indomitable frustration would appear, as though by outraged recapitulation evoked, quiet inattentive and harmless, out of the biding and dreamy and victorious dust.

Her voice would not cease, it would just vanish. There would be the dim coffin-smelling gloom sweet and oversweet with the twice-bloomed wistaria against the outer wall by the savage quiet September sun impacted distilled and hyperdistilled, into which came now and then the loud cloudy flutter of the sparrows like a flat limber

stick whipped by an idle boy, and the rank smell of female old flesh long embattled in virginity while the wan haggard face watched him above the faint triangle of lace at wrists and throat from the too tall chair in which she resembled a crucified child; and the voice not ceasing but vanishing into and then out of the long intervals like a stream, a trickle running from patch to patch of dried sand, and the ghost mused with shadowy docility as if it were the voice which he haunted where a more fortunate one would have had a house. Out of quiet thunderclap he would abrupt (man-horse-demon) upon a scene peaceful and decorous as a schoolprize water color, faint sulphur-reek still in hair clothes and beard, with grouped behind him his band of wild niggers like beasts half tamed to walk upright like men, in attitudes wild and reposed, and manacled among them the French architect with his air grim, haggard, and tatter-ran. Immobile, bearded and hand palm-lifted the horseman sat; behind him the wild blacks and the captive architect huddled quietly, carrying in bloodless paradox the shovels and picks and axes of peaceful conquest. Then in the long unamaze Quentin seemed to watch them overrun suddenly the hundred square miles of tranquil and astonished earth and drag house and formal gardens violently out of the soundless Nothing and clap them down like cards upon a table beneath the up-palm immobile and pontific, creating the Sutpen's Hundred, the *Be Sutpen's Hundred* like the oldentime *Be Light*. Then hearing would reconcile and he would seem to listen to two separate Quentins now—the Quentin Compson preparing for Harvard in the South, the deep South dead since 1865 and peopled with garrulous outraged baffled ghosts, listening, having to listen, to one of the ghosts which had refused to lie still even longer than most had, telling him about old ghost-times; and the Quentin Compson who was still too young to deserve yet to be a ghost but nevertheless having to be one for all that, since he was born and bred in the deep South the same as she was—the two separate Quentins now talking to one another in the long silence of notpeople in notlanguage, like this: *It seems that this demon—his name was Sutpen—(Colonel Sutpen)—Colonel Sutpen. Who came out of nowhere and without warning upon the land with a band of strange*