



Scan this QR code with your smart phone to see more information about Karle Wilson Baker.

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<http://www.sfasu.edu/heritagecenter/7040.asp>



Karle Wilson Baker is significant in Nacogdoches for her writing, which was often inspired by her observations around Nacogdoches.



Misty Hurley, a Graduate Student in Public History at Stephen F. Austin State University, created this brochure as part of her thesis on cemetery preservation and creation of interpretive materials connecting Oak Grove Cemetery of Nacogdoches with historic sites, museums, artifacts, and archival records.



This project has been created in conjunction with the Center for Regional Heritage Research at SFASU. Photograph of Karle Wilson Baker courtesy of the Center for East Texas Studies.

Karle
Wilson
Baker



Poet, Author,
and Professor



Karle Wilson was born on October 13, 1878, in Little Rock, Arkansas to parents William Thomas Murphey and Kate Florence Wilson. Karle attended multiple colleges throughout her life, including the University of Chicago, Columbia University, and the University of California at Berkeley. Karle received an honorary Doctorate of Letters from Southern Methodist University in Dallas in 1924.

Karle's love of literature began early in life and she recalled writing her first poem at the age of eight, when she announced to her family that she would like to be an author, but remembered that her passion for writing began before that time.

In 1897, Karle's parents moved to Nacogdoches, and four years later she joined them to help take care of her ailing mother. On August 8, 1907, Karle married Nacogdoches banker Thomas Ellis Baker. The couple had two children, Thomas and Charlotte, who inspired the author to write children's books. Nature, birds, trees, flowers, and the weather of Nacogdoches also inspired

Karle and influenced her poetry and novels, such as her work *The Birds of Tanglewood*.

Another book that was widely popular was *The Texas Flag Primer*, published in 1923 and adopted by the state textbook committee from 1926 to 1929. In 1925, President Birdwell of Stephen F. Austin State Teacher's College



offered Mrs. Baker a position in the English department. Through her relationships with other authors, Baker secured notable figures such as Robert Frost and Rachel Field to speak at Stephen F. Austin. Another contribution Baker made to SFA

was her assistance in writing the school song "The Pine Tree Hymn," which was adopted in 1924 and remained the official school song until 1948. In 1931, Karle's collection of poetry *Dreamers on Horseback*, was nominated for a Pulitzer prize.

Not only was Karle Wilson Baker known throughout the country for her work, but through her writing, she also introduced readers to what life in was like in East Texas.

Visit these sites associated with Karle Wilson Baker

- Karle Wilson Baker's Home "Tanglewood" (now the Sigma Tau Gamma Fraternity House) - 711 North Mound St. (this home is not open for tours)
- Karle Wilson Baker's Statue - at the corner of Mound St. and Hughes St.
- Read some of Karle's poetry at http://www.poetry-archive.com/b/baker_karle_wilson.html
- Examine Karle Wilson Baker's Manuscript Collection at the East Texas Research Center - A/2
- Karle Wilson Baker's grave - Oak Grove Cemetery - North Lanana St.