

SOUTHERN FRONT

WHY NOT A DUPLEX?

*A poet's shrine is in
the center of a storm*

The house in which Robert Penn Warren, America's first Poet Laureate, was born doesn't look particularly noteworthy. Nestled among turquoise-trimmed mobile homes and z-brick blockhouses in Guthrie, Kentucky, it has received little notice over the years—until, that is, Western Kentucky University decided to buy the place, move it to their Bowling Green campus some 50 miles away, and make it into a center for Warren studies. At that point, what had been an uncared for pile of wood and stone became, to some Guthrie residents, a not-to-be-lost part of the town's heritage, and town officials promised to use every means possible to keep it out of WKU's grasp.

Such late blooming concern for literary shrines is nothing



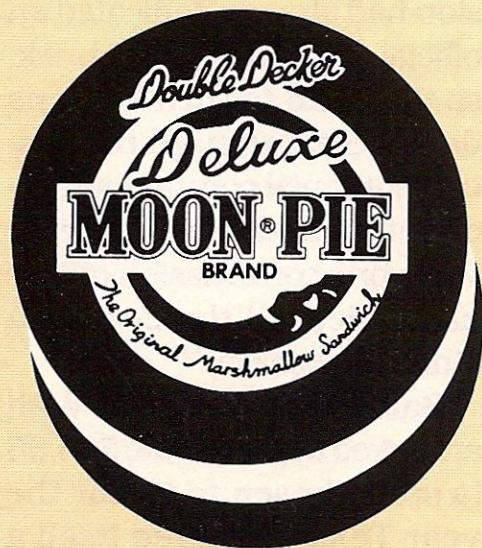
A place to come to? Robert Penn Warren claims little memory of the house sought as his literary home.

new—the people of Oxford, Mississippi, didn't realize the value of Rowan Oak, William Faulkner's home, until a rumor circulated that the University of Texas wanted to buy and move it, and the citizens of Asheville, North Carolina, were slow to appreciate Thomas Wolfe's boyhood residence—but there's a special

irony at work in Guthrie. Warren, who has kept himself removed from the affair, has little memory of the house that's being fought over by town and gown. He was born there in 1905, but soon after, his family moved to another house a few blocks away from the disputed structure, and it is *that* house, the one in

which he grew up, that Warren actually remembers. That house still languishes in obscurity, and it is a source of wonder to some observers why neither Guthrie nor WKU has tried to restore Warren's true boyhood home, instead of struggling over the building in which the author happened to be born.—*E. Thomas Wood*

MOON PIE: A cellophane-wrapped circle of salvation that consists of a marshmallow center, graham-cracker cookies, and a chocolate, vanilla, or banana dip coating, the Moon Pie is a Southern staple. While there are now many dipped marshmallow sandwiches, there is only one Moon Pie, and it's the creation of the Chattanooga Bakery in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The delicacy was first envisioned in 1918, when a traveling salesman suggested to Sam Campbell Jr., founder of the Chattanooga Bakery, that he create a marshmallow sandwich "as big as the moon"



SOUTHERN ALMANAC

and sell it cheaply. The pie, which is made in near secrecy (the formula for it is guarded religiously), spread quickly across the region. During the Great Depression, when the pie was larger in circumference than today's four-inch diameter product (the weight remains the same), the stomach-filling confection could be purchased for a nickle; when coupled with a five-cent Royal Crown

Cola, it was the basis of many a Southerner's "10-cent lunch" and also helped turn "An RC and a Moon Pie" into a cliché. Despite the changes in the South, Moon Pies are still available in most supermarkets, and for good reason: Aside from the action-packed boost of energy a Moon Pie eater gets as he devours the sugary delicacy, there are uses for the treat—especially the gooey marshmallow center—that lesser snacks just can't match. Try, for instance, fixing the hole in your bicycle inner tube with a barbecue-flavored potato chip or a Nab.—*Donovan Webster*