

Broken Chords, A Novel by Jocelyn Miller

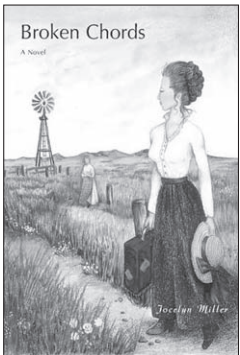
by Priscilla Friedersdorf

This new novel, *Broken Chords*, by local author Jocelyn Miller, traces a family from their home in Summer Creek, Tennessee in the late 1900s through an odyssey of cultural and geographic change which extends into the 20th century.

Miller, like Joyce Carol Oates, has the ability to capture the sad innocence and ultimate heartbreak inherent in young, nubile women who are seduced by uncaring and irresponsible men. This is the plight of Hannah McCade and then her younger sister Jemma; each left with infants by fast-talking country boys.

"Poor Jemma. Every time she looks at Nathan, she'll be seein' that no-good, two-timin' polecat." Miller has a gift for replicating country speech patterns.

Their father uproots the family hoping for better luck in Pontiac, Illinois, where a friend of his has resettled. Hannah



**David Bell McKinney born 1857, died 1932
and Sarah Gouge McKinney born 1857,
died 1935**

anticipates a new beginning. "We're like new people, born again – gettin' another chance to set things right." And to herself, she thinks, "God in heaven, don't let my past come lookin' for me." But, of course, it does.

And Mama. Mama's not happy either and one day there is a note on the door: "Davie, We ain't no good together no more. I am gone, so don't come lookin' for me. I have worked my fingers to the bone for everyone, and I am tired...now I'm a goin' to do what I can for myself." Hmmmm, some of these lines might war-

rant copying down.

This book is a real page turner; it follows the fortunes or lack thereof, of the McCade women as they seek lives with more hope and opportunity than their deprived beginnings have offered.

Broken Chords is subtitled "A Novel of Fiction Inspired By True Events" and in the brochure with the review copy is a group of photos of the extended McKinney family which I assume are the inspirations for this novel of heart-rending events in lives led during hardscrabble times.

Jocelyn Miller has an intense interest in the lives of women from colonial, frontier and Victorian eras.

Broken Chords is available at local bookstores; MacIntosh, Sanibel Island Bookshop and also Bailey's General Store and Jerry's Foods. ✨