

FROM THE COVER



Boomer Times
& Senior Life

Book of the Month

Wild Card

Author: Ronald B. Taylor — *Reviewed by Bill Finley*



The author, Ronald B. Taylor, grew up in the depression era in the Central Valley of California and witnessed the miseries, corruption and inhumanities that crushed the souls of the workers and their families hired to pick the lush crops that sprang from the rich soil.

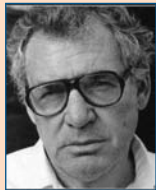
A four-time Pulitzer nominee, he spent decades undertaking investigations into the brutality, cheating and unfair treatments that plagued the workers who lived at the bottom of the national barrel. It was work to eat or curl up and die in despair. The author's in-depth knowledge about man-made and God-made scourges make him totally believable and worth reading.

Writing for the *Fresno Bee* and the *Los Angeles Times* and dozens of other papers and magazines, as well as books on life in the San Joaquin Valley, he drills deep into characters we can love, hate, feel sorry for and respect. His basic message is that, no matter what, some people emerge with their inner strength intact as well as a willingness to help others in the same boat.

His 1988 book, *Long Road Home*, was favorably compared with the long-term literary powerhouse of John Steinbeck's, *Of Mice and Men*, and was made into an NBC TV movie in 1991.

For readers drawn to the down and dirty, gritty and grim realities of low life in the alley starting in 1939 when picking cotton at \$1 per hundred pounds was considered a good wage, this book reeks of pain, crookedness, and human endurance. The wrenched battles between the farm owners and the Union organizers make real the basic conflicts between capitalists and lowly workers with no say about their wages or working conditions.

The writer's characters are felt in three dimensions, easy to see and understand. For those who seek passion, feel empathy or get riled up about inequities, this is the perfect milieu. For those who want to be entertained by drawing room elegance and sexual dalliances, leave this book on the shelf.



WILD CARD is the culmination of Ronald B. Taylor's lifetime observing, feeling, sharing and illuminating the downside of American life in the agricultural fields of central California. No one could do it better in terms of authenticity or sensitivity. Just his inside stories about politicians and their henchmen is worth the price of the story.

(Publisher: TimberGap; Cost \$14.95. To order, go to www.timbergap.com or at your local bookstores or amazon.com)