



Vol. 3, No. 5, January 29, 2021

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From the Editor

There's lots of new books on the way, some from our Pages of the Past friends. Celia Martin has a book releasing in the next week – *Unexpected Treasure*. Chrystyna Lucyk-Berger has *The Girl from the Mountains* due out in a few days. Malve von Hassell is looking forward to *The Amber Crane* releasing in the next month or so. So, there's lots of good reading coming your way. We'll feature each of these over the next few weeks, along with other new books too.

This week we're chatting with author Gini Grossenbacher about some of her books. Pull up a chair, enjoy a cup of tea, and read on to find out some fascinating tidbits about her writing.

Also coming up is a new short story contest to celebrate our 2nd birthday this coming April. Details on the short story contest will be in next weeks newsletter. The prize is a \$50 gift card. Come back next week to find out about the contest and see the three pictures that are prompts for the story.

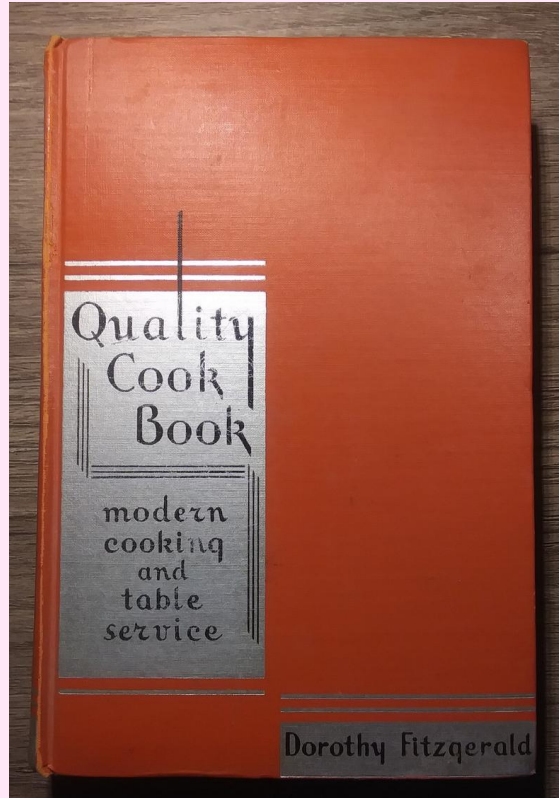
Stay tuned for future issues –In the weeks ahead we have author interviews scheduled with Chrystyna Lucyk-Berger, Sherry Burton, EJ Barnes, Marina Osipova, Renata Stankova, Tom Palmer, Malve von Hassell, Peter Turnham, and more!

Trisha

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Housework – 1932 Style



What's a peek into the past without old cookbooks? Here's one that gave me a different view of the world in 1932.

I found out that I've been doing it all wrong.

Browsing through a cookbook I discovered at an antique store, *The Quality Cook Book* (1932), I discovered that I haven't been running my household properly.

The first chapter 'The Art of Serving' begins 'In wealthy homes ...' which may be the tip-off that this advice doesn't apply to the majority of American homes. Especially in 1932. Most family stories and tales I've heard from older friends that experienced the post-depression years were not in the setting of 'wealthy homes'. The accounts I've heard tell of a hand to mouth existence, where survival was the day-to-day goal.

But ... assume for a moment, that we were in a 'wealthy home' in 1932. Here is the advice given.

THE MAID

A good maid is the most important part of the household, and her main qualifications are: Reliability, Cleanliness, Order, Speed, Good nature – and it is hard to say just which one of these can be more easily dispensed with. The maid, in an apartment of not more than seven rooms, and with no children to care for, is expected to

Keep the apartment clean
Cook and serve meals
Answer telephone
Answer doorbell
Wash and iron all fine lingerie, handkerchiefs and stockings.

The proper uniform for a maid is blue or gray percale in the morning, and black, or gray, with small white apron, collar, cuffs, and headband, after noon. She should wear lisle hose, and medium height plain oxfords.

The well-trained maid observes a routine as scrupulously exact as that of any army private or hospital nurse. The house which is not run on a schedule is not well run. An experienced mail will welcome a well-planned working day, and with an inexperienced maid, a properly planned routine is invaluable. The following is suggested for a six-room apartment with two adults. Such a routine, typed and pinned over the kitchen sink, trains the maid with a minimum of effort and worry on her own and her mistress' part.

DAILY ROUTINE

Breakfast, 7:45. Sweep living room with vacuum or carpet sweeper; dust; go over windowsills with oiled or wet cloth depending on finish; wash ash trays; refill cigarette boxes; put fresh match boxes on tables.

9:00 – Clear breakfast table; sweep dining room; and dust. Sweep bedroom floor, strip beds, and leave, to air. Scrub bathroom floor, tub, and bowl, wash soap dish and all fixtures, hang fresh towels. Wash dishes, wash dish towels, boil, hang to dry. Make beds, dust bedroom, wash soiled hose, and hang to dry.

Luncheon – Prepare whatever food can be prepared in advance for dinner. Do dishes, scrub kitchen floor. This leaves remainder of day free for silver, cupboards, pressing, etc., until time to get dinner.

WEEKLY ROUTINE

Monday – Clean ice box; polish silver; clean book shelves.

Tuesday – Clean stove; clean drawers.

Wednesday – Wash lingerie and iron. List laundry.

Thursday – Polish furniture. Go over all overstuffed pieces with Energine; clean ice box.

Friday – Clean closets; polish nickel.

Saturday – Clean shelves; wash all bulbs in electric fixtures; press dresses.

That's our trip back in time for this week. Now, if you'll excuse me – I've got some dishtowels to boil and some light bulbs to wash.

Author Spotlight: Gini Grossenbacher



Hello Gini Grossenbacher. Welcome back to Pages of the Past. We enjoyed chatting with you in July 2020 about two of your books: *Madam of My Heart* and *Madam in Silk*. For our newer members, or those that may have missed your earlier author spotlight, could you give us a short recap of those two books?

*Certainly—my pleasure! *Madam of My Heart* invites the reader into a tale of love, loss and redemption as the pregnant Brianna Baird struggles to find her identity and personal freedom against the colorful but threatening backdrop of 1850s Baltimore, New Orleans, and Gold Rush San Francisco.*

**Madam in Silk* weaves an immigrant's tale of survival, justice, and dignity as the young, widowed Ah Toy arrives from China in San Francisco's 1849 only to find herself penniless. Forced to open a lookee parlor, then a brothel, she struggles to find the means to thrive in Gold Rush California.*

Both American Madams novels involve women's empowerment as both madams struggle against the repressive social currents and customs that would bring them truth and happiness. Heartwarming, romantic page-turners.

When we talked to you last, you were working on a sequel – *Madam in Lace*. Who do we get to meet in this book?

*In 1857, Celeste, the French prostitute from *Madam of My Heart*, embarks on a quest through France in search of her mother, a former madam in Paris. Celeste unwittingly falls in with a group of Italian revolutionaries bent on destroying Emperor Napoleon III. Despite family setbacks and romantic betrayals, will she ever be able to forgive and trust again? A thrilling page-turner that brings to life the French Second Empire.*

Do you have an estimated publication date for it yet?

Late fall/early winter 2021-2.

You'd mentioned that you'd founded a group – Elk Grove Writers & Artists. I know that both of the writing groups I'm involved with have faced many challenges over the past year with the Covid restrictions on gatherings. Has your group been affected, and how have you navigated as a group in the Covid tempest?

That's a really good question, Trisha. When we faced a lockdown last spring, we began meeting on Zoom instead. That was quite a learning curve for all of us, but we helped each other with the technology. I think we went through a period of mourning about not being able to write together and hear our fingers tapping our laptops or our pens scratching on our notebook pages. But we've had to adapt, and the positive side has been our ability to increase our class, adding our writing friends from Oregon, Wisconsin, Chicago, as well as California locals. That has enriched our program a lot, and I think even post-COVID we'll offer a branch of our courses on Zoom for those who wish remote access.

What are your thoughts about the importance of writers being involved in writing groups or other collaborative efforts?

As we know writing is an isolating act. I think we need to break through to connect with other writers and authors to grow, not only in our craft, but also to share marketing strategies, to keep up with the latest trends in our genres, and simply to exchange news. It's very healthy to reach out, though sometimes it takes a degree of humility to admit we need help or advice from others. I need others to read my manuscripts, to give me feedback, to act as cheerleaders, to wipe my tears at times.

From several of our mutual author friends, I see that you've recently joined another group – The Paper Lantern Writers. Congratulations on joining a group of authors that I think highly of. *How did this come about?*

My dear author friend, Linda Ulleseit, invited me to join, and I was delighted. I met Linda some years back at the Berkeley BookFest, and I am a great admirer of her work. I love the collaborative nature of the group and I can learn so much from their collective expertise in writing and marketing historical fiction.

You already have degrees in English and Education, but I've seen on Facebook that you're continuing your coursework with classes in copyediting. I know this keeps you even busier than usual. Have these classes changed your writing path?

I am finishing my last copyediting course for my UC San Diego certificate in copyediting. I would say that copyediting training has enhanced, rather than changed, my writing path, since I've been trained to look at my own work, as well as those I coach, not only as a fellow author, but the way an editor or reader would as well. It has given me perspective, confidence, and more tools for the writing life.

How has your storytelling through these different books changed your life?

All those American Madams stories ran around in my head for years. When I was a child, my imaginary world was vivid and colorful, and as I grew up, those elements of living dreams remained. Being able to publish and share my historical fiction books with readers has brought those dreams to them, and I love sharing the character's experiences with them and hearing their reactions. Readers give me the strength and the courage to sit down and write down another of my living dreams.



You can find Gini Grossenbacher's books here:

[Madam of My Heart](#)

[Madam in Silk](#)

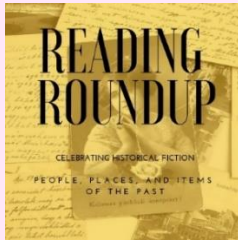
You can find Gini Grossenbacher here:

www.ginigrossenbacher.com

<https://www.facebook.com/ginigrossenbacherauthor/>

<https://twitter.com/GGrossenbacher>

BIO: MADAM IN SILK is California teacher and freelance editor Gini Grossenbacher's second historical fiction novel. That novel was a finalist for Historical Fiction in the 2020 National Indie Excellence Awards and runner-up for Genre Fiction in the 2020 San Francisco Book Festival. Her debut novel MADAM OF MY HEART garnered the 2018 IPPY silver medal for Historical Fiction; finalist in the 2018 American Fiction Awards for Historical Fiction; honorable mention at the 2018 San Francisco Book Festival for General Fiction; and runner-up in the 2017 Hollywood Book Festival for Genre Fiction. She is also a copyeditor for memoir and fiction writers and leads an inspiring writers group called Elk Grove Writers and Artists, providing lessons in novel writing, memoir, poetry, and flash fiction. When she's not writing, Gini can be found taking long walks, tending the roses in her garden, and barbecuing with her husband and beloved dog, Murphy Brown.



The 1900s/1910s



The Little Orphan Girl

Sandy Taylor

Ireland, 1901: The work house gates clanged shut behind us, as me and the mammy walked down the hill towards the town. I was six years old and leaving the only home I had ever known...

When Cissy Ryan's real mother comes to claim her from the workhouse, it's not how she imagined. Her family's tumbledown cottage has ice on the inside of its windows and is in an isolated, poverty-stricken village in the muddy Irish countryside. But when Cissy is allowed to help neighbour Colm Doyle and his horse named Blue on their milk round one morning, Cissy starts to feel as though friendship could get her through anything.

It's Colm who looks in on Cissy's grandfather when she starts at the village school, and Colm who tells her to hold her chin high when she interviews for a position at the grand Bretton House. But in the vast mansion with its shining floors and sweeping staircase, it's Master Peter Bretton who captures Cissy's heart with his dark curls and easy laugh.

As Cissy blossoms from a skinny orphan into a confident young girl, Colm tells her she's as good as anyone and she begins to believe anything is possible. But not everyone with a kind smile has a kind heart, and Cissy doesn't know that further sorrow lies in store for her.

When Cissy finds herself desperate, alone, and faced with a devastating choice, can she find the strength to survive?

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