



Vol. 2, No. 20, May 15, 2020

In this issue:

- Memories and Recollections
- Author Spotlight: Mary Lingerfelt
- Reading Roundup: Books from the 1900s/1910s

From the Editor

Happy Friday to this wonderful group of Pages of the Past followers. I hope all is well in your life and for those that you love during these tumultuous days.

Today we're sharing an excerpt about 'Memories and Recollections.' And, hey, during these difficult coronavirus days, we may have our own memories to document and call into use for future projects. It wasn't planned this way, but since we're talking about memories (and how they often differ in various versions), it's interesting that our featured author, Mary Lingerfelt, has used many of her father's memories and stories to create one of her books, *The Sins of Jubal Cooper*. Keep reading to find out more.

Stay tuned for future issues – Today we have a fascinating interview with Mary Lingerfelt, and in the weeks ahead we have author interviews coming up with Lindsay Downs, Johanna Wittenberg, Caleb Pirtle III, DK Marley, and more!

Trisha

texastrishafaye@yahoo.com

[Get Pages of the Past delivered to your inbox every Friday!](#)

Join us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/184527085517941/>

Memories and Recollections

The excerpt below doesn't deal specifically with writing historical fiction. It's taken from a workbook I created for a class I was teaching on writing your family stories. However, since we often refer to people's memories of a time past when we're researching for writing historical fiction, I thought the topic could apply to our roles as historical fiction authors.

Memory

Whether we are writing memoir, historic documentation of a family history, or creating a fictional tale based on true beginnings, we rely heavily on memory – which has been proven to be imperfect.

Our own memories, even though we think we have perfect recall, may err drastically from the truth of what actually happened. The family members that we interview may be spot on in the memories they think of to tell you. Or, those moments may have been distorted by the passage of time and the many experiences that have occurred since.

A lot may vary just because of our own individual perceptions of an event. I was talking to a co-worker about this subject one day. There were three of us in the room discussing some now-forgotten work drama and how another employee's version of what happened differed so drastically from theirs.

I commented that even if someone came in immediately after our conversation and recorded details about what happened – they'd get three different stories. There may be much in common, but we all pay attention to different details. One will recall the conversation with more accuracy. Another may not remember much at all because their mind was far away, dwelling on one of their own problems and they weren't paying attention. Another may remember the clothing that was worn, or the perfume that filled the room, while with someone else the clothing or its color may not have even registered.

Next, add ten, twenty, or sixty years to the timeline. How accurate is that memory going to be?

In *Writing Life Stories*, Bill Roorbach tells a story that his sister likes to frequently re-tell. It involves a younger brother, sucking on a blue toy bolt until it stuck to his lip. The sister finally wrestled it off and when it came loose the younger brother's lip swelled to tremendous proportions and everyone freaked.

Except...the author claims that his sister wasn't there. He was. The bolt was yellow, not blue. And he and his mother both laughed about it. He writes,

“Memory is faulty. That's one of the tenets of memory. And the reader comes to memoir understanding that memory is faulty, that the writer is going to challenge the limits of memory, which is quite different from lying.”

He also writes,

“Even facts distort: What's remembered, recorded, is never the event itself, no matter how precise the measurement...”

Just be aware that our individual perceptions and the passage of time may alter what we try to convey as historical fact. Sometimes a bit of a disclaimer worked into the narrative may help smooth over some of the possible differences in account.

- As far as I recollect...
- The conversation went something like...
- My ex – let's call him Doofus James...
- The story of how he got his first job bootlegging may be lost, but one can assume...
- Though the details have been lost through the years, it most likely...

All in all, since we're most likely not out looking for journalistic awards for this work, the important thing to know is that recording our family's legacy is what's important. As Carol Lachappelle, in *Finding Your Voice Telling Your Stories*, shares: The poet Anne Sexton wrote, ***"It doesn't matter who my father was, it matters who I remember he was."***



[Get Pages of the Past delivered to your inbox every Friday!](#)

Join us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/184527085517941/>

Author Spotlight: Mary Lingerfelt

This week we're delighted to introduce you to Mary Lingerfelt, another multi-talented author that writes in several genres. Mary and I had a conversation on Facebook, and of course, when I heard that her book, *The Sins of Jubal Cooper*, was set in the post-Depression era – my favorite time period to read about and write in – you know I was intrigued and wanted to know more.

Mary joins us today to share about how some of her father's family stories ended up in *The Sins of Jubal Cooper* – along with more fascinating tidbits about her books.



Hello Mary. Welcome to Pages of the Past as our spotlighted author today. You have some contemporary fiction books under your belt, along with several Amish-themed books. But two of your more recent books have a historical nature to them, *The Sins of Jubal Cooper* and *Lovers and Leavers of Leadville*. What brought about the shift from contemporary to historical eras?

Thank you for inviting me to Pages of the Past, Trisha! And in answer to your question, I kind of fell into writing historicals. I wasn't brave enough to do it initially, but then I got an assignment to write a Christian historical for another author, and so I plunged in. I found that I loved writing historical novels. Some really remarkable people walked the earth back then. Sometimes I'd research their stories and just shake my head.

What differences did you notice when you moved from writing books set in contemporary times to writing in periods from the past?

Well, that it was slower going. Especially at first, because I had to research; but I just fell in love with it. Research is my favorite part of writing a book, because it's a form of time travel. I can get lost for hours in details like the different gadgets men wore to cheat at cards, or the meaning of old phrases like getting the "fantods." (It means the jitters, but it sounds like so much more.) I love those little details.

***The Sins of Jubal Cooper* is set during the Depression-era days. We had a discussion on Facebook about how family tales has influenced some of our writing and how many of your dad's stories led to *The Sins of Jubal Cooper*. Can you tell us a little bit about that?**

My Dad was a great storyteller. He never wrote anything down, but he could hold me spellbound for hours with stories of growing up in the Depression. A lot of the events in *Sins* actually happened, so I didn't so much write them, as remember them. The stories about kids throwing rocks at the hobos, the hot refrigerator, the brother who had "the sight" and claimed to see the dead, the fight with the frozen pork shank, and unfortunately even the lynching on the courthouse square, were all real things that happened in my father's early life.

I guess the theme of this book is the different ways people find to survive hardship. My protagonist, Will Henry, has to grow up a lot quicker than a child should, because his world is a dangerous place. Being a child, he finds humor and fun in it, in spite of that, but danger is always there in one form or another. This book is about how an eight-year-old boy manages to navigate those dangers, and the ways his mind and his conscience process the Georgia of the 1930s. He talks to God a lot -- mostly as an apology for something he's just done.

Did you have to do any other research to be able to turn the family stories into a fictional tale?

Very little for this one. I researched the details of *Lovers and Leavers*, but I know the whole universe of *Sins*. I know the little town my father grew up in and have visited it since I was a child myself. I've heard his stories for years, heard them corroborated by other relatives. I grew up on the dialect, and I know the old culture of the deep South. It was pretty much the same for me in the early 60s as it had been for him in the 30s. Not much had changed in the rural South in all that time. It was just beginning to change then. I saw the last of it as a child, so I have firsthand experience.

Your latest book, *Lovers and Leavers of Leadville* jumped back further in time to the 1880s. What lead you to write in that time? Did writing in that period pose any difficulties?

I wrote *Lovers and Leavers* mostly because I did research on the town for another book and was just captivated by it. In the 1880s, Leadville was the epicenter of the Colorado Silver Boom, a rush that made overnight millionaires out of grocers and clerks. It attracted men who dreamed about getting rich quick, both in the mines and at the card tables. Leadville was a bonanza town for gamblers, prostitutes and con men. I was especially fascinated by an historical character named Soapy Smith. You could make the case that he was the most successful con man in American history. He operated mostly in Denver, but he got his start in Leadville, and eventually became the king of Denver's underworld. He was an engaging scoundrel.

I made Soapy my heroine's mentor in *Lovers and Leavers*. Kat Cardanne is the daughter of Soapy's recently deceased best friend, Colonel Jack Cardanne, and Soapy helps her set up a mail-order bride swindle. All goes swimmingly until a straight-arrow Christian detective named Boone Burton is hired to find Kat and prosecute her. I had a lot of fun with the characters in this book.

I didn't think of the necessary research as a chore, so for me, it wasn't difficult. I love to learn. For *Lovers and Leavers* I had to research games of chance, and certain swindles current back then, and that was an education!

Do you find yourself preferring to write in historical periods or contemporary times, and why? (No wrong answers here, we're just curious.)

I enjoy contemporary romance, but I love historicals, especially Old West historicals. The world was a much freer place back then, which made it better in some ways, but also more dangerous, so it offers all kinds of possibilities for a writer. People were less educated, but I think wiser and stronger than we are today in many ways. So you have a wilder, more open setting, and some really strong, vivid characters to write about.

Do you have any other books in progress (in any time period)? Can you give us a little teaser and let us know when we can look for it?

Lovers and Leavers is the first in my Leadville series. The second book is tentatively titled *Liars and Ladies of Leadville*, and for this one, I think I'm going to make a character of Margaret Brown, aka "the unsinkable Molly Brown." She lived in Leadville for many years, was a champion of women's rights, and came very close to running for congress.

The basic plot of the story is that Luke, a young cowboy, and his two friends are getting unwanted romantic attention from some very big, rough girls, so they leave town and go to Leadville, where they become part-time deputies for the beleaguered sheriff. Lacey, a young mail-order bride, also comes to Leadville to meet her fiancé. But she finds out that he's the town undertaker -- a fact he failed to mention in his letters. She eventually becomes so angry with him that she renounces love forever. Her fiancé continues to pursue her, and Luke falls in love with her at first sight; but both of them have their work cut out when Lacey is befriended by Molly Brown and joins the fight for women's rights.

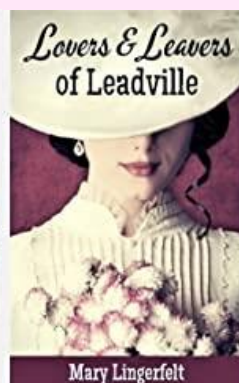
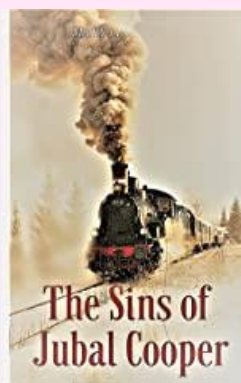
I'm also going to give some characters from *Lovers and Leavers* a few turns in this book. Sly con man Farraday Teller, and "Miss Delia's best girl" Auralee Harris will be making appearances in *Liars and Ladies*. Miss Delia herself may look in now and then.

I hope to get *Liars and Ladies* out in early fall.

Is there anything you'd like to share with us that I didn't ask you about?

Just my heartfelt thanks for letting me share my stories with your readers!

Thank you for joining us today, Mary. We appreciate your time. Please leave a few links where our readers can find you and your books and we'll go follow and friend you.



You can find Mary's books here:

The Sins of Jubal Cooper <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07FR5ZRZK>

Lovers and Leavers of Leadville <https://amzn.to/3bMoXYX>

My Amazon author page <https://amzn.to/3a8eDt3>

You can find Mary here:

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MaryLingerfelt>

You Tube: <https://bit.ly/3bMoiH5>

Facebook: <https://bit.ly/3cjmm9l>

BIO: I've worked as a small-town reporter, an industrial spy, an editor for The Salvation Army, and a burger flipper for McDonald's (where I lasted a week.) I'm a fan of J.R.R. Tolkien, Georgette Heyer, Jane Austen, and Arthur Conan Doyle.

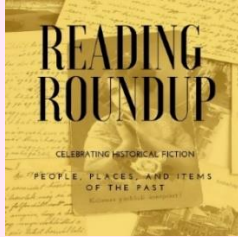
I'm a night owl and usually don't get to bed before 2 a.m. I run on tea and chocolate. I live with one cat of royal blood and dozens of very sociable characters, all of whom like to talk to me at inappropriate times.

My goal for my novels is that they should be fun reads; but more than that, I hope they portray the beauty and satisfaction of a life lived in friendship with God.



[Get Pages of the Past delivered to your inbox every Friday!](#)

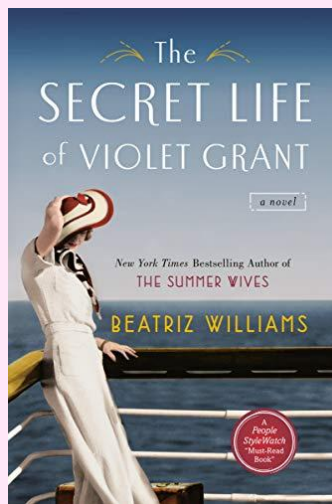
Join us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/184527085517941/>



The 1900s/1910s

The Secret Life of Violet Grant

Beatriz Williams



Fresh from college, irrepressible Vivian Schuyler defies her wealthy Fifth Avenue family to work at cutthroat Metropolitan magazine. But this is 1964, and the editor dismisses her...until a parcel lands on Vivian's Greenwich Village doorstep that starts a journey into the life of an aunt she never knew, who might give her just the story she's been waiting for.

In 1912, Violet Schuyler Grant moved to Europe to study physics, and made a disastrous marriage to a philandering fellow scientist. As the continent edges closer to the brink of war, a charismatic British army captain enters her life, drawing her into an audacious gamble that could lead to happiness...or disaster.

Fifty years later, Violet's ultimate fate remains shrouded in mystery. But the more obsessively Vivian investigates her disappearing aunt, the more she realizes all they have in common—and that Violet's secret life is about to collide with hers.

[Get Pages of the Past delivered to your inbox every Friday!](#)

Join us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/184527085517941/>