



Vol. 2, No. 47, November 20, 2020

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From the Editor

Hello and Happy Friday historical fiction lovers!

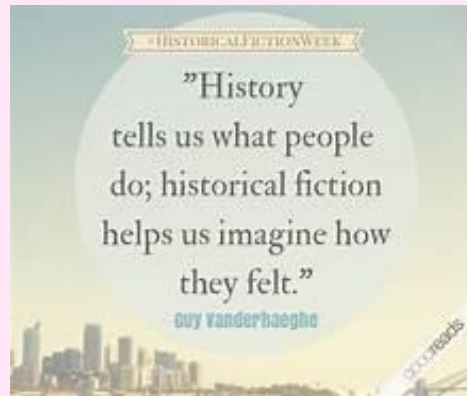


I know It's not Thanksgiving yet. But as our next issue comes to you the day after, I'm going ahead and saying 'Happy Thanksgiving' to you all now. Our Thanksgiving arriving next week may be so different from any we've ever experienced before, yet even with all the strife and problems facing us in today's world, there are still so many reasons to be thankful and feel blessed. Maybe that's one benefit to reading a lot of historical fiction. We discover that the world keeps turning and life goes on. (Well, except for those of Atlantis...)

Stay tuned for future issues –In the weeks ahead we have author interviews scheduled with Eileen Donovan, Angela Petch, Linore Burkard, Celia Martin, and a lot more!

Trisha

History vs Historical Fiction



One comment I hear frequently when I mention writing historical fiction is, "Oh, I wouldn't like that. I don't like history."

Actually, neither do I. Although if you checked my browser and saw how many countless hours a year I spend researching different historical facts and events, you wouldn't come to that conclusion. But when I was a student, if a history class was optional, I was *not* taking it.

Some may think its splitting hairs, but while history and historical fiction are *related*, they are not the same thing. Borrowing two quotes from Cindy Vallor's site, [Thistles & Pirates](#), these sum it up better than what I can say it.

History and historical fiction are necessarily not the same things. The purpose of history is to narrate events as accurately as one can. The purpose of historical fiction is to enable a reader through the perspective of characters in the story to feel that she or he is present at the events. Such a goal obviously requires some modification of the events. -Andrew M. Greeley

History strives for reality, for what is provable, documentable. Historical fiction should strive for the story that underlies reality and thus become an imagined reality. -- David Nevin in A Note on Methods and Sources in 1812

Speaking of historical fiction, if you're interested in this genre, you'll want to check out [Thistles & Pirates](#). Vallor links to over **a hundred articles** about historical fiction. There are so many on that list that I'd like to read. I bookmarked her page so I can go back and read more articles that intrigue me. Her page is a wealth of information.

As historical fiction authors, we may be living in the past, but we're writing a story about it.

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Author Spotlight: Janet Oakley



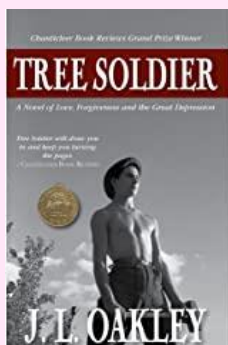
Welcome, Janet Oakley! Your books cover a wide span of years – from the 1860s to World War 2. What drew you to want to write about these periods from the past?

I guess I write about these periods because I'm curious. I grew up on stories about a great-grandfather who was a Union surgeon at the Battle of Gettysburg, an ancestor who settled the town of Newburyport, MA in 1638, and the women on both sides of my family in the 1800s who settled the West.

I started writing historical stories in fifth grade and wrote stories with historical bones all the way through high school. That led to a degree in US History and a thesis on the Comanche Indians as prisoners of war, researched at the Library of Congress, National Archives and the Smithsonian Anthropology Archives.

Always curious, when I went out to Hawaii on a one-way ticket, I went deep into their history, the Royal Hawaiian Kingdom in the 19th century and became a guide at the Mission Houses Museum which tells the story of the missionaries of 1821 from New England. The Hawaiian Renaissance in the 1970s was just beginning and I incorporated their revival in their culture and language into my tours. I have been involved in museum and public education ever since.

After living in Hawaii for eight and half years, I returned to the Mainland in the Pacific NW with my husband, a little son. and many stories in my head.



Your book, *Tree Soldier*, tells an interesting story of Park Hardesty in 1935. An unfortunate incident lands him in a government forestry camp in the forests of the Pacific Northwest, but Park and his problems are far from over. Can you tell us a little about *Tree Soldier* and where you got the inspiration for this story from?

My wonderful mom grew up in Boise, Idaho. She often told me stories about the Civilian Conservation Corps boys from New Jersey who came to work in the wilderness near her uncle's remote ranch in Lowman. The year was 1933 and she had been attending music school in Caldwell, Idaho. It was rough ride in a Model T up to Lowman from Boise and she'd stay there for several days at a time during that

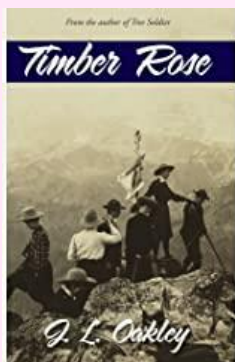
first summer of FDR's New Deal program. The kids were poor, from Jersey City I learned some sixty years later, and felt lost out there in the wilderness. They found a friend in my mom at her uncle's store, the only place for miles around. Mom said one of them was very musical and he and others would come to store to play music and sing songs. She said that people called them "Joisey boys", something that echoes in *Tree Soldier* in the name, "Joisey Squad."

Tree Soldier came about when I needed a history paper for my Masters in Education. I thought of the CCC boys Mom talked about and wondered if there was a CCC camp in my Pacific NW county. There was: Camp Glacier. I was able to interview several former CCC boys in their 60s and 70s. They told wonderful stories of life during the Great Depression and how the CCC saved them and their families. Every man felt pride in the trees they planted about Mount Baker, our 10,000+ mountain in the area, the roads and campground they built. Soon I was writing *Tree Soldier* with many of their stories told through my characters in the novel.

Your next book published, *Timber Rose*, sounds fascinating. It's 1907 in the North Cascade Mountains and women are climbing mountains in long, voluminous skirts.

My sister and her husband were trail angels on the Pacific Coast Trail for many years, so I heard many hiker stories, and got to speak to several of the hikers that stayed at their home. It's funny, thinking of all the preparation hikers do now, getting ready for their big adventure. And in *Timber Rose*, the women take off, full skirts aloft.

How did Caroline's character and story evolve into *Timber Rose*?



That's cool about your sister being a trail angel. There is a connection between the early mountaineering clubs of 1907 and their nascent trail building, the CCC, and the Washington Trail Association of today.

Funny thing, Caroline didn't out of an interest in the early hiking club. It was a book that a museum colleague got as a gift gag when she got married: *What a Young Wife Ought to Know* by Dr. Emma Drake, 1901. The gist of it is that there was not a lot of information on the wedding night. In fact, that expected chapter went straight to the layette.

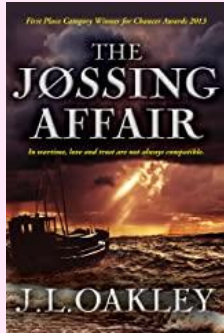
The sequel, *What a Young Husband Ought to Know*, however, had very explicit instructions on how not to rape your wife on the wedding night and other really shocking and irritating things.

Curiosity got me again. It made me wonder what it was like to be a married couple in 1907. I already had a brief background description of Caroline and Bob Alford in *Tree Soldier*. They had eloped, there had been her family's disapproval, and Caroline was disowned. Just a few sentences. I started to write the novel, then put it aside to work on another novel idea.

Rediscovering the beginning research on *Timber Rose* spurred me to go the Special Collections at UW in Seattle and go through the Mountaineers scrap books. The club broke off from the Mazamas around 1907 (the first real mountaineering club in the NW). There I found photos of these wonderful women who climbed up around Mount Baker (A popular outing) and the North Cascades around Seattle in skirts, but there were also day hikes up around Snoqualmie Falls and just across Lake Washington. The women were

dedicated to the outdoors and preserving the environment as the logging industry bit into the forests. Exploring the early Forest Service was another fun way to shape the story of marriage, family, and the New Woman—the vision Caroline and her progressive friends wanted in the early 20th century.

You just celebrated a new release, *The Quisling Factor*. It's the sequel to *The Jøssing Affair*, featuring the Norwegian Resistance in World War 2. You've stated that two real-life stories influenced your books – those of Henry Oliver Rinnan and Telavåg. Can you tell us about these two?



Oh, boy. I'll talk about Telavåg first. The history of Norway during WWII is not very well known. For example, 400,000 German soldiers occupied the country which had a population the size of Berlin in 1940: 3 million. In addition, some of most wicked Nazis ran the country under Terboven, a personal friend of Hitler. When the Norwegians began resisting against the Germans, measures to subdue them increased. The Shetland Bus was an organization which brought arms and agents from the Shetland Islands. Telavåg was one of the drop off points for this work.

In April of 1942, there was a shoot-out between two agents and the Gestapo. One agent and both Gestapo men were killed. To punish the fishing village for their support of the Shetland Bus, all males between 16 and 65 were arrested (a few shot on the spot) and sent to Sachsenhausen-Concentration Camp in Germany. All the buildings and fishing boats were blown up. The livestock shot. The Germans put the woman and children on a prison boat and eventually in school far from the island for the duration of the war. Half the men died in the prison camp. The rest never fully recovered when they came home. The tragedy of Telavåg has affected a member of my protag's family. In real life, the PTSD both the nation felt and agents after the war is one of the elements of *The Quisling Factor*.

Henry Oliver Rinnan. A Norwegian of very small stature, Rinnan joined the Gestapo not long after the German occupation began. A sociopath and narcissist, he led a highly effective team of women and men who infiltrated and disemboweled hundreds of resistance groups north and south of Trondheim, Norway, and the islands off the mainland. His headquarters in a house outside of the Trondheim city center became known as the "Cloister." It was a bona fide house of horrors with its torture chamber in the basement. Over 1000 British agents and Norwegian patriots passed through it. A hundred plus died there. Rinnan personally killed thirteen. At the war's end, after Quisling, Rinnan was Norway's Number Two war criminal.



Your book, *Mist-Chi-Mas: A Novel of Captivity* starts out in an English Camp on an island in the Pacific Northwest in 1860. Then, twenty years later, Jeannie Naughton, the main character circles back to the past in an unusual way. I adore the title of this book. Can you tell us how you came about choosing this title, and share what Jeannie is like?

Mistchimas is a Chinook wa wa word meaning captive. This 19th century Pacific NW trade jargon is a mixture of Chinook, English and French and was a lot of fun to use in *Mist-chi-mas*. I wanted to show how people can be held captive. Jeannie Naughton is a young English widow falsely accused of a crime. She flees to the Pacific NW under the protection of her uncle who is in the Hudson's Bay Company

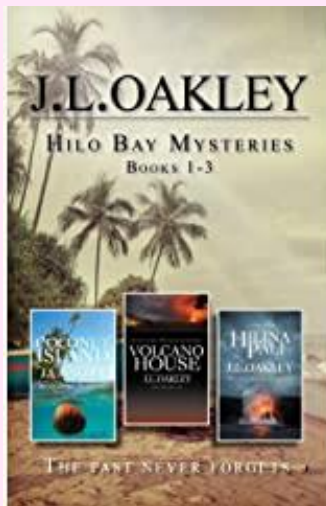
in Victoria, BC. Jeannie is a captive to the norms of her time—1860s—when society dictated what a woman should and could not do. It took courage to stand up. *Mistchimas* can also mean slave. Jonas Breed, the love interest, is a true *mistchimas*. Captured by the Haida as a boy, he was a slave to an important family in Haida Gwaii, far north of Washington Territory. He eventually earns his freedom, but his time with the Haida has shaped him. *Mist-chi-mas*, my novel, also looks at how the Coast Salish people, and the Kanakas (Hawaiians) are also held captive to the events created by white settlers around them. I love Jeannie for her ability to grow and make new friends in cultures that are beyond the tight Victorian confines of her society.

I see you have a mystery series also – Hilo Bay Mysteries – which has three novellas: *Coconut Island*, *Volcano House*, and *Hilina Pali*. These stories are told in present day time, with an 80-year old Auntie Bee Takahashi and her great-niece, Tawnie Takahasi who is a crime reporter. Yet, all of these focus on solving old mysteries and crimes, which takes us back to the past.

The description of Coconut Island reads:

A box of letters from a WWII soldier stationed on the Big Island is found at the Big Island Historical Society and unlocks painful memories for Tawnie's Great Aunt Bee. Bee's older sister was swept away in the 1946 tsunami, but now Wendy suspects she was murdered first. As she delves into the mystery, Tawnie meets a group of nonagenarians who were at the USO center on Coconut Island during the war. One is a hero. Another is a cold-blooded murderer.

This series sounds like a perfect combination for those who enjoy tales of the past, and mysteries. What was it like researching and writing these novellas?



I'm a proud University of Hawaii Manoa grad. Like I said, when I left Hawaii for the Mainland years ago, I brought along stories. I had always been curious about why Hilo on the Big Island of Hawaii where I lived for nearly four years was so far back from the bay? I went through the 1975 7.3 earthquake that caused a lot of damage to the Hilo waterfront. But nothing like the 1946 April Fool's Day tsunami that came from Alaska in under five hours. I got married in Liliuokalani Park next to Coconut Island. I was surprised to learn that there have been an officer's club there during WWII.

Curiosity struck again. When I started writing this series, I decided to combine the history of the tsunami with a murder mystery. It's been great fun. I learned from the fabulous Hilo librarians that the "club" was a USO facility opened to any military on the island. They even found photos that showed what it looked like. This is how I write about anything with history in it. I do the work to recreate that historical world as best I can. I'm happy that I've received high marks from locals.

There are two other novellas in this series: *Volcano House* which involves the 1889 visit of Robert Louis Stevens to the Big Island and *Hilina Pali*, where the Civilian Conservation Corps worked during the 1930s. I have to rewrite the fourth, *Saddle Road*, which I hope to do this spring.

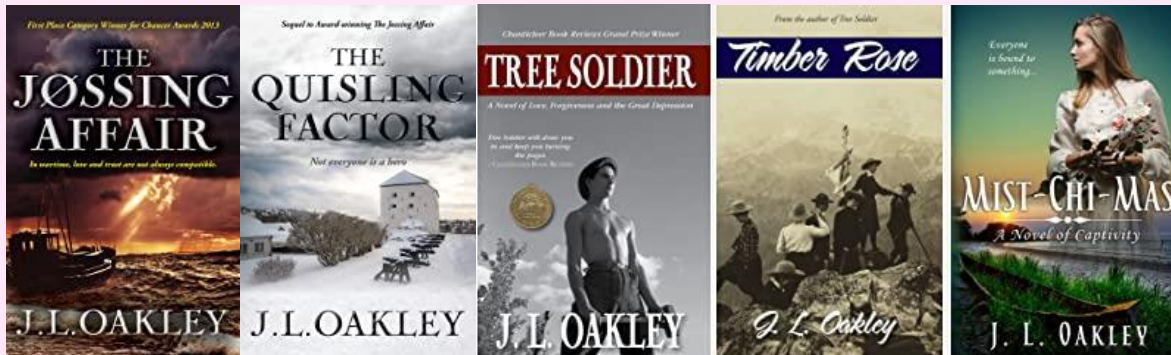
Is there anything you'd like to share with us that I didn't ask you about?

Thank you for asking. I'm very excited about the audio book for *The Jøssing Affair* that is in production starting this week. UK actor and Author Chris Humphreys is narrating and producing it. The coolest thing is that his own mother was in the Norwegian Resistance.

I've been invited to be the opening speaker for the Sons of Norway Lodge in Washington D.C. for their 75th celebration of the liberation of Norway. It'll be on Zoom, of course, so honored.

Finally, I would like readers to know that I'm very happy to Zoom with their book clubs about any of my novels. History is my name and game.

Thank you for joining us today, Janet. 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 Janet's books here:

Village Books in Fairhaven <https://www.villagebooks.com/>

Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/J-L-Oakley/e/B004CF0W0W/>

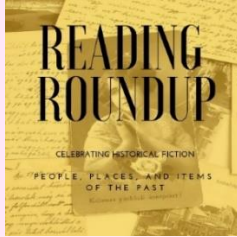
You can find Janet here:

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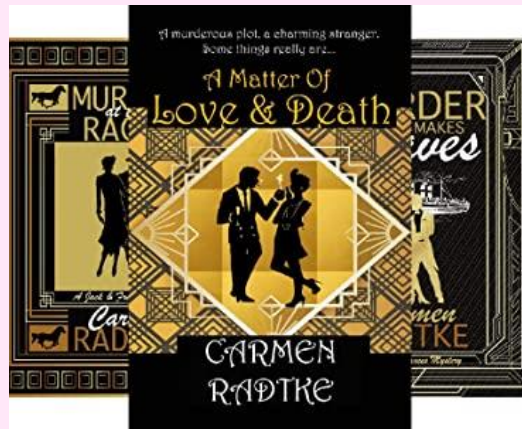
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The 1930s



Jack and Frances 3-book Series

Carmen Radtke

See no evil, hear no evil?

Adelaide, 1931. Telephone switchboard operator Frances' life is difficult as sole provider for her mother and adopted uncle. But it's thrown into turmoil when she overhears a suspicious conversation on the phone, planning a murder.

If a life is at risk, she should tell the police; but that would mean breaking her confidentiality clause and would cost her the job. And practical Frances, not prone to flights of fancy, soon begins to doubt the evidence of her own ears - it was a very bad line, after all...

She decides to put it behind her, but it's not easy. Luckily there is the charming, slightly dangerous night club owner Jack. Jack's no angel - six pm prohibition is in force, and what's a nightclub without champagne? But when Frances' earlier fears resurface, she knows that he's the person to confide in. Frances and Jack's hunt for the truth puts them in grave danger, and soon enough Frances will learn that some things are a matter of love and death...

If you love sparkling dialogue, glamorous settings and the charm of the Golden Age mysteries, you'll enjoy Carmen Radtke's cozy whodunnits, perfect for fans of Agatha Christie, Ngaio Marsh, Rhys Bowen and Carola Dunn.

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