



Vol. 2, No. 19, May 8, 2020

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From the Editor

The world may have seemed to come to a screeching halt over the past few months. And all one has to do is turn on the news, fire up a laptop, or pop into Facebook and we're all aware that the Coronavirus crisis isn't over yet. Yet while all our lives have been impacted, there are still some things that continue. Authors keep writing books. Readers keep reading.

New releases that have been in the works for a while, like the newly released *The Road to Liberation*, continue as planned. Authors still come to Pages of the Past to share tidbits about their historical fiction journey. And most of us still sit down at the end of the day and pick up the latest volume that has claimed our attention.

Unfortunately, while most of us are impacted by minor (in comparison) inconveniences, I've also seen some reports where death from the Coronavirus has touched the lives of too many people in the sphere of my life. My heart goes out to those. It makes the worries of most of us – Will we be able to work? Will we be able to get necessities? How long will we be locked up at home? – seem trivial and insignificant. I'm hoping that all who read this issue are safe and healthy, along with those you love.

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

Trisha

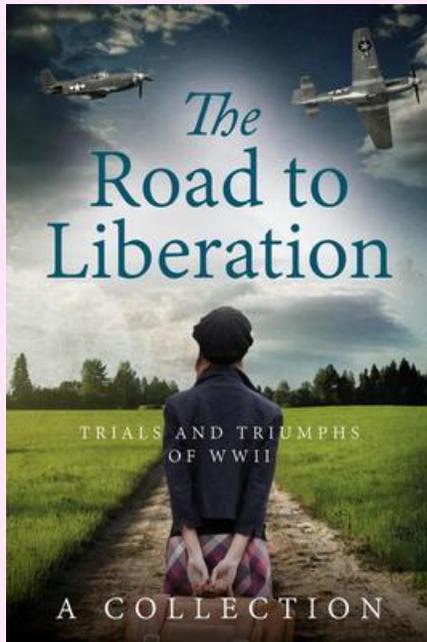
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New Release: The Road to Liberation

Today's featured author, Marion Kummerow, and our past featured author, Chrystyna Lucyk-Berger (June 28 and returning September 4th) are two of the authors in this set. You can get the entire 10-book set, *The Road to Liberation* ebook, for only 99 cents **until May 11th**, celebrating the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. (There's a link at the end of Marion's author spotlight.)



Ten riveting stories dedicated to celebrating the end of WWII. From USA Today, international bestselling and award-winning authors comes a collection filled with courage, betrayal, hardships and, ultimately, victory over some of the most oppressive rulers the world has ever encountered. By 1944, the Axis powers are fiercely holding on to their quickly shrinking territories. The stakes are high—on both sides: Liberators and oppressors face off in the final battles between good and evil. Only personal bravery and self-sacrifice will tip the scales when the world needs it most. Read about the heroic act of a long-term prisoner, an RAF squadron leader on the run in France, a Philippine family fleeing their home, a small child finding unexpected friends amidst the cruelty of the concentration camps, a shipwrecked woman captured by the enemy, and a young Jewish girl in a desperate plan to escape the Gestapo.

2020 marks 75 years since the world celebrated the end of WWII. These ten books will transport you across countries and continents during the final days, revealing the high price of freedom—and why it is still so necessary to "never forget".

Included books are:

Stolen Childhood by Marion Kummerow

The Aftermath by Ellie Midwood

A Long Way Back by Fenella J. Miller

Prisoner from Penang by Clare Flynn

Too Many Wolves in the Local Woods by Marina Osipova

Adele's Story by Rachel R.

Heil Liberation Berlin by JJ Toner

Magda's Mark by Chrystyna Lucyk-Berger

Liberation Street by Kellie Butler

When's Mummy coming? By Rachel McKenna

Buy now and indulge in more than 1000 pages filled with suspense, danger, heartbreak, and redemption.

Librarians on Horseback



Most people think of librarians as sedately settled behind their counters assisting patrons, in the stacks shelving books, or in the back office ordering new selections. While we picture them busy working away amidst the silent reams of paper surrounding them, we don't often think of them outside of the four enclosing walls they work in.

This isn't always the case. While bookmobiles have been part of a library's history over the years, with a few still operating, from 1935-1943 the WPA funded a project for the residents of

rural Kentucky, where many librarians delivered their printed products on horseback.

Wikipedia reports:

The first Pack Horse Library was created in Paintsville in 1913 and started by May F. Stafford. It was supported by a local coal baron, John C.C. Mayo, but when Mayo died in 1914, the program ended because of lack of funding. Elizabeth Fullerton, who worked with the women's and professional projects at the WPA, decided to reuse Stafford's idea. In 1934, A Presbyterian minister who ran a community center in Leslie County offered his library to the WPA if they would fund people to carry the books to people who could not easily access library materials. That started the first pack horse library, which was administered by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) until the WPA took it over in 1935. By 1936, there were eight pack horse libraries in operation.

Trails could be difficult and dangerous, except where the WPA had completed its farm-to-market road program.

The Pack Horse Library Project was headed by Ellen Woodward at a federal level. The project ran between 1935 and 1943. "Book women" were hired by the WPA and worked for around \$28 a month delivering books in the Appalachians via horseback or on mules. They delivered both to individual homes and to schoolhouses. The WPA paid for the salaries of the supervisors and book carriers; all books were donated to the program.

There were around 30 different pack horse libraries who served around 100,000 different people in the mountain areas. The libraries also served around 155 schools in these counties by 1937.

I thought the idea of packhorse librarians was fascinating. Earlier I'd seen one historical fiction book on the subject, *The Bookwoman of Troublesome Creek*. I had it on my wish list, and luckily (for me) a friend bought it and shared her copy with me. Being in my favorite time period, the 1930s, of course I enjoyed the book.

While researching to write this post, I discovered another fictional tale based on the same subject, *The Giver of Stars*. I also saw that there was some dispute about the second book borrowing many of the concepts and plot points from the first. (Disclaimer: I haven't read *The Giver of Stars* yet.)

Both books were published in 2019, *The Bookwoman of Troublesome Creek* in May, and *The Giver of Stars* in October.

A post that goes into detail about the similarities is [here](#). I have to admit, there are a few instances cited that seem specific and the odds of them being coincidences seem slim. But yet, others, don't seem to be copying at all. For instance, both ladies receive a quilt for a wedding present. In 1930s Kentucky? What couple didn't receive a quilt for a wedding present? Another example is that patrons in both books ask the librarian for issues of *Woman's Home Companion*. One of the most popular publications in that time, and a hand reference for women? That point doesn't convince me either.

But looking closer at some of the claims, the while timeline issue, as a writer, doesn't concern me. Yes, Richardson, author of *The Bookwoman of Troublesome Creek*, began her research and writing earlier (researching in 2015 and first manuscript to her agent July 2017).

By then, Moyes, author of *The Giver of Stars*, was already researching and writing. She reports that she saw a 2017 Smithsonian article about the packhorse librarians that prompted her to write her book. By July/August 2017 she was already writing and by the time the November 2017 book description was published, Moyes already had done research trips and made a Facebook post about her newest work.

So, what does all of this have to do with us as historical fiction authors? Naturally, it can nudge us to be careful with our work, so we don't end up in the same dispute. For myself, I think the most important part is to document, document, document! Keep records of your research. Keep records of your trips. Make public Facebook posts that can document that you've been working on this, even as another book on the same topic is being released.

There are no new topics. There are no new main plots. Now, the twists and turns and the way we deliver the stories – those are ours.

Despite the dispute between the two authors, and yes, I still want to read the second book, and despite my cautions to be careful to document my research in the future, the subject of packhorse librarians is still fascinating.

You can read more about them, and see some fabulous vintage photographs on these two sites:

[The Fierce Female Librarians Who Delivered Books On Horseback During The Great Depression](#)

[Horseback librarians during the Great Depression](#)

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Author Spotlight: Marion Kummerow

Author Marion Kummerow joins us this week to talk about some of her many books based during the World War II period. She also shares a bit about how her grandparent's history influenced one of her series. Keep reading to find out more!



Hello, Marion. Welcome to Pages of the Past. You have so many books published, it's hard to know where to begin. You have several non-fiction books out, and then it looks like you dived headfirst into World War II tales. Can you tell us what prompted the switch from writing non-fiction to historical fiction?

I started with non-fiction, because it was the logical thing to do, since I had been writing articles for my website about Munich for many years. It was basically the next step. And then I got hooked and started writing fiction.

World War II certainly appears to be 'your' era. What has it been like to research this period?

Research is certainly hard and emotionally draining. In my books I don't mention the grisliest details, leaving much to the imagination of my reader, but during research I have to read all of that.

An advantage is that time witnesses are still alive. I have relatives who lived through this time and can help me with day-to-day details, but this is also a disadvantage, because everyone seems to be an expert of the time, because "their father/uncle/grandfather served".

Your first World War II series, the trilogy that begins with *Unrelenting*, has a special significance for you. Can you tell us a little bit about your grandparents and how their choices over 75 years ago ended up propelling you into writing the books that you have?

My paternal grandparents were always a mystery to me. The only thing I knew was that they'd been "spies" and "communists".

After the German reunification in 1989 a political science student came to my parents' house to write a Master thesis about my grandfather.

I was intrigued. Suddenly dozens of letters written by them and my great-grandparents appeared and gave me an intimate glimpse into their lives and the struggles of ordinary people during the Third Reich.

But it took many more years – and a turn from project management to fiction writing in my life, until I pondered the idea to write a fictionalized novel about them.

It was scary. Emotional. Terrifying even. Thus, I discarded the idea, but a voice in my head wouldn't let me forget. After four more years and digging deep into my courage I finally relented and set myself a deadline to write the first book *Unrelenting* to give them – and so many other unnamed heroes – a voice.

Your War Girls series is standing strong with 12 books. Can you tell us a little bit about what inspired this series and you ended up adding to the series? Are there any follow-up issues planned for this series?

While writing *Unwavering* (Book 3 in the Love and Resistance in WW2 Germany Trilogy), I read through the many letters my grandmother sent during her time in prison.

She mentioned twice a prison guard whom the prisoners called “Blonde Angel”. She didn't say much, just something along the lines of, “The Blonde Angel allowed me an extra 15 minutes of visit time” or “The Blonde Angel said women aren’t executed anymore”. But those two sentences intrigued me enough to start wondering what kind of person the Blonde Angel might have been and why she became a prison guard, of all professions.

I have no idea about her real name, but I created Ursula Hermann as homage to the real-life person who brought a modicum of comfort to the lives of my grandmother and the other inmates. Apart from the reference to her nickname, the person of Ursula Hermann is entirely fictional.

It was initially planned as a trilogy, so I won’t say there aren’t any follow-up issues anymore, although I’m quite sure the series is finished.

Your newest series, Berlin Fractured, has two books right now. *From the Ashes* released in November 2019 and *On the Brink* released in February 2020. What is different about this series, compared to War Girls and the trilogy? Are there more books planned in this series?

This series is set after the war, *From the Ashes* in 1945-1947 and *On the Brink* during the Berlin Airlift 1947/48. I’m currently working on book 3, *In the Skies*, which is also set during the airlift, and there may be more books, since I always get new ideas while writing.

The time when the world slides into the Cold War is quite fascinating, and Berlin was smack dab in the middle of all of it. Here, the fate of the world and the breaking up into two opposing super-powers with their sphere of influence happened.

In this issue we’re promoting a new release, *The Road to Liberation*. Many authors have stories included in this new book. Your book *Stolen Childhood* is in it also. What is *Stolen Childhood* about and how where you inspired to write this story?

My story in the collection “Stolen Childhood” tells the story of Rachel (17) and Mindel (4) in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

About two years ago I visited the Bergen-Belsen camp memorial and the temporary exhibition of children in concentration camps.

It was an eye-opening, and rather haunting experience. Ever since I’ve wanted to write a book from the point of view of a child but wasn’t courageous enough to start. My daughter was about the same age as Mindel and when I finally mustered the strength to start writing, having her was both helping to get into Mindel’s mindset and elevating my emotional stress levels immensely. Just the thought of her having to go through this, made me weep.

Once it comes out of the collection, it will be part of the War Girl series, since Rachel and Mindel both appeared already in book 2 *War Girl Lottte*.

Thank you for joining us today, Marion. We enjoyed what you've shared with us. Please leave a few links where our readers can find you and your books. we'll follow and friend you and check out your books.



You can find Marion's books here:

The Road to Liberation: <https://books2read.com/RoadtoLiberation>

This will be 99ct until May 11 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII

War Girl Ursula: <https://books2read.com/Ursula>

From the Ashes: <https://books2read.com/AshesBerlin>

You can connect with Marion here:

Facebook -- <https://www.facebook.com/AutorinKummerow/>

Twitter -- <https://twitter.com/MarionKummerow>

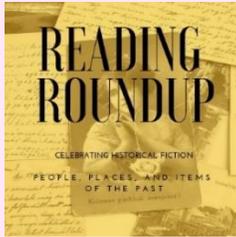
Pinterest – https://www.pinterest.de/m_kummerow/

Marion Kummerow was born and raised in Germany, before she set out to "discover the world" and lived in various countries. In 1999 she returned to Germany and settled down in Munich where she's now living with her family.

After dipping her toes with non-fiction books, she finally tackled the project dear to her heart. UNRELENTING is the story about her grandparents, who belonged to the German resistance and fought against the Nazi regime. It's a book about resilience, love and the courage to stand up and do the right thing.

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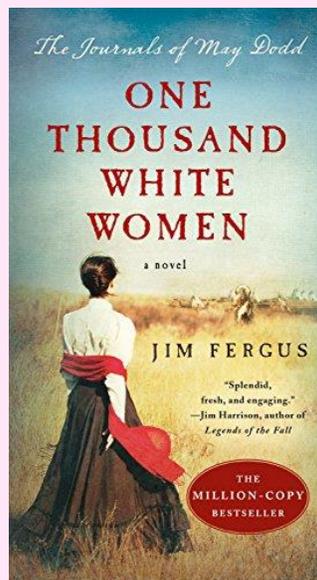
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The 1800s

One Thousand White Women: The Journals of May Dodd

Jim Fergus



One Thousand White Women is the story of May Dodd and a colorful assembly of pioneer women who, under the auspices of the U.S. government, travel to the western prairies in 1875 to intermarry among the Cheyenne Indians. The covert and controversial "Brides for Indians" program, launched by the administration of Ulysses S. Grant, is intended to help assimilate the Indians into the white man's world. Toward that end May and her friends embark upon the adventure of their lifetime. Jim Fergus has so vividly depicted the American West that it is as if these diaries are a capsule in time.

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