



Vol. 2, No. 30, July 24, 2020

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## From the Editor

For three weeks, instead of our usual weekly author spotlight, we're having an Author Recap of the many talented and delightful authors that have shared themselves with Pages of the Past over the past year and a few months. Their names are linked to the original issue that has the entire interview. If you see anything that sounds interesting, just click on their name and you'll be taken to the whole interview that includes links to some of their books, and links where you can follow them on social media.

This week we're sharing a highlight from our E – L authors. (Yes, I got lazy and alphabetized the list as is, so they're in order by first names – not last.)

We're also having a new short story contest! Ana Brazil used the picture below of a 1922 automobile dilemma in her post for [Paper Lantern Writers](#) and thought it might be fun to use as a contest prompt. When I realized that I had a copy of of *The Roaring '20s* that could pair up as a gift for this great photo, I decided to follow through on Ana's suggestion. Details for the short story contest follow, along with a cover copy of the magazine that will go to one lucky winner.

Stay tuned for future issues –In the weeks ahead we have author interviews scheduled with Chris Karlsen, Joyce E.S. Pyka, Linda Ulleseit, Christina Baker Kline and a lot more!

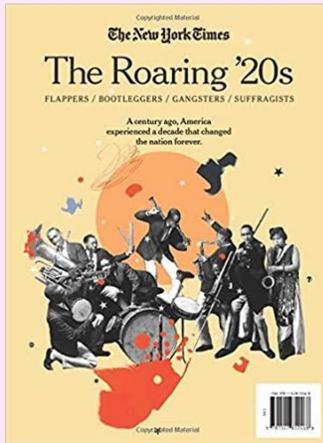
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## Short Story Contest



Let's have a little short story fun. Ana Brazil used the picture below of a 1922 automobile dilemma in a post for [Paper Lantern Writers](#) and thought it might be fun to use as a contest prompt. I realized I had a copy of *The Roaring '20s* that could pair up as a gift for this great photo.

Enter your flash fiction story for a chance to win *The Roaring '20s* (value \$14.99). (Sorry it's not the \$50 gift card that we've had in previous contests, but – COVID times and reduced work hours...)

Write a 300 - 500 word story to the picture below. Email your entry to [texastrishafaye@yahoo.com](mailto:texastrishafaye@yahoo.com) with 'CONTEST ENTRY – (title of your story)' in the subject line.

***Entries are due by midnight, Saturday, August 8th.***

The stories will be printed in the August 14th newsletter. A PDF will be compiled with all the stories and posted on Facebook, allowing readers a chance to read and vote for their favorite. The contest will run until August 24<sup>th</sup> at midnight. The winner will be announced in the August 28<sup>th</sup> newsletter.

***Use the photograph below as a prompt for your story.***



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## Transportation – Covered Wagon

Earlier in the year I picked a list of A to Z topics, which were planned for an A to Z blog challenge last April. Alas, I didn't get the entire alphabet written in time to post during the month of April. But I've kept going on the alphabetical list to finish it up here at Pages of the Past.

This week we come to the 'T' topic. I'd chosen 'Transportation Times' as the general subject planning to write about travel by covered wagon, horse, boat, and early automobile.

Diving into my research, I knew that I could write about all of it in one article – if I kept the information very brief and basic with only a paragraph or two on each. However, I discovered that there's so much information available on each mode of transportation. I thought it would be better to go a little deeper with the details and only cover one mode of transportation each week.

I suppose it's Charles and Matilda Medlin and their daughter, Mittie Ann, that first got me interested in researching this method of travel, although I didn't need to dive too deep into the details for what I needed at that time.

When I moved to Texas twelve years ago, with no family in the area, we spent our first Christmas here on a historic cemetery hop. We went to four or five older cemeteries, spending the day communing with people of the past. At one of them, Medlin Cemetery, I saw the grave site of Mittie Ann, the first person buried there. For some reason this 21-year old girl tugged at my heartstrings and I wanted to know more.

I spent many hours over the next several years researching the Medlin's, who came to Texas from Missouri via wagon train.

I wanted to write Mittie Ann's story, but I didn't feel that I was a good enough writer yet to tell her tale. I decided to write *other* things in the meantime, learning my craft and when I got good enough...*then* I'd tell her story.

Well, here it is twelve years later, and I still haven't made it to Mittie Ann's story – other than an occasional article about her or a short story.

Of course, many ideas have jumped in and out of my consciousness since then. Some I've pursued and written. Others never made their way to a printed page. My brilliant idea from 2019 was that I was going to tell my families story. In a very fictional manner, as I had very few supporting facts to draw from.

The trilogy was going to begin with Goss Hollow, a tale of Benjamin Franklin and Martha "Patsy" Goss, my great-great-great-great grandparents. Basically, all I knew was that Benjamin Franklin was a captain in the War of 1812, and they ended up being buried in Big Fork, Arkansas. I'd visited their grave once on a trip I took visiting eight different cemeteries where my ancestors were buried in Arkansas and Missouri. Other than those facts, and their children's names, everything would be 'made-up.' (Whew! Good thing the component of 'fiction' is there.)

As I began researching, which is still where I'm at with this story, I discovered a blog that talks about the early settlers that came to Big Fork. One of the posts is about my Goss ancestors who came on a [wagon train from Georgia to Arkansas in 1851!](#)

If I'm going to begin their story in Georgia, follow them as they move to Arkansas via wagon train, and then settle into their new land, then I need to know more about traveling in a covered wagon.

What was it like to travel in one?

How far could they travel each day?

What was it like riding in one?

How much could one covered wagon carry?

Thankfully, our days of research are easier now. Now we can conduct most of the preliminary research from the comfort of our home, sitting there in our jammies if we so desire. No more the days of traveling from library to library, in search of elusive materials.

## **HOW LONG IT TOOK**

Travel via this way took a lot of planning and preparation. You didn't decide to move, throw everything in the old covered wagon parked out back, and head for the hills. It was slow going. Old Bessie, or the oxen that was pulling the wagon could only move so fast. Especially with a wagon loaded with several thousand pounds of freight. Also affecting the rate of travel was the terrain, the weather, the current hazards.

[AnswersDrive.com](http://AnswersDrive.com) says that travel could vary from ten to twenty miles a day. Some trains traveled on Sundays and some didn't.

While not all stories need to have the length of travel, for my Goss family tale, I'd like to know an approximate amount of time they traveled. Alas, GGGG-Grandma Patsy didn't leave me a detailed journal for me to use.

In this instance, I take the approximate mileage from Lumpkin County, Georgia to Big Fork, Arkansas, which is 700 miles. I'll use the average of 15-miles per day. Seven hundred miles divided by 15 miles per day equals 46.6 days of travel.

If they made good progress and traveled straight through, not stopping on Sundays, they may have been able to make the trip in six weeks. If the going wasn't as good, they stopped on Sundays, and with Benjamin's age of 74-years old and Patsy's of 68-years old, it might have taken a bit longer, up to two months.

But, I also know from the blog post about them that they traveled in the Fall of 1851. If they set out in fall, they may have wanted to get there as quickly as possible so they could reach Arkansas and get a little settled in before winter. But, at least with these calculations, I have a rough idea of the travel time involved to get from Georgia to Arkansas in a covered wagon.

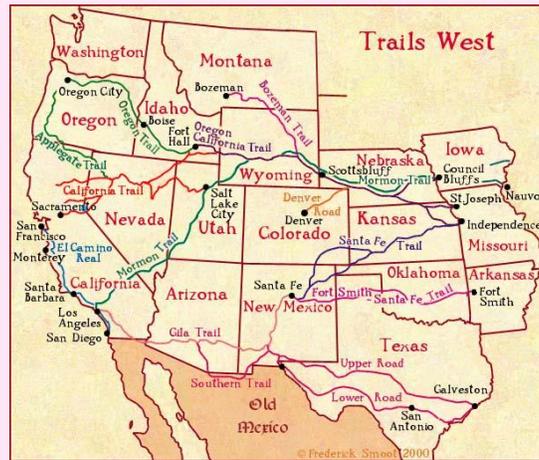
## **TRAILS**

Many of the westward expansion trails are well known in US history. The Overland Trail, The Sante Fe Trail, The Oregon Trail, the Mormon Trail, and others. Most often, many families banded together and joined others, both for safety, and for the knowledge of the guides that led the wagon trains.

[Encyclopedia.com](http://Encyclopedia.com) reports: It was not until 1843 that the celebrated "cow column" Oregon emigrant party of about one thousand persons brought most of its 120 wagons over the trail to arrive near the Columbia River on 10 October, the first wagon train to reach Oregon Country.

They also write: A well-known road from Council Bluffs, Iowa, to the Great Salt Lake in Utah Territory via Fort Bridger (in present-day Wyoming), was traveled by thousands of Mormon pilgrims from 1847 to 1860. By 1865, trains five miles long were occasionally reported. An

average caravan was composed of scores of giant prairie schooners, each capable of transporting between four thousand and seven thousand pounds and drawn usually by five or six yoke of oxen.



[TNGenWeb](#) has a nice map of some of the western trails, along with useful information.

### WHAT THEY TOOK WITH THEM

Covered wagons were limited in what they could transport. These weren't the days where if what you had was more than would fit, you'd upgrade to the next size U-Haul.

Besides families, which were usually larger than households today, there were belongings, clothing, furniture, tack, guns, and more. Plus, the family needed to eat – sometimes for several months.

[Real World Survivor](#) states: According to a migrant named Joel Palmer, overland travelers to California via the Oregon Trail in the early 1850s were instructed to bring along, per person, “two hundred pounds of flour, thirty pounds of pilot bread, seventy-five pounds of bacon, ten pounds of rice, five pounds of coffee, two pounds of tea, twenty-five pounds of sugar, half a bushel of dried beans, one bushel of dried fruit, two pounds of saleratus [baking soda], ten pounds of salt, half a bushel of corn meal; and it is well to have half a bushel of corn, parched and ground; a small keg of vinegar should also be taken.” Given that the recommended load of a Conestoga wagon was only 1,600 pounds, it's easy to see that provisioning well didn't leave much room for extras.

From movies I've seen, I always picture the family riding along, some on the front bench of the wagon, others walking alongside of it, with all their early possessions packed to the brim in the canvas covered portion behind them. The [Oregon/California Trail Center](#) gives me a different view. They have an interior photo and a rendering (which I can't copy to show you here, but you can see on their site) that shows that much of the interior space was set up as livable quarters for the long trek.

They also have a nice page that gives details about what a typical [Day on the Trail](#) would be like.

And there you go. There's probably more information here than you'd ever want to know about traveling on a wagon train. But if you're an author thinking about writing a story where this type of travel is involved, there's some good starting points to get you going.

Happy Trails!

## Author Recap #1 (E-L)

This week we're taking a peek at some highlights from our authors from E to L. We're posting an excerpt from each. Click on their name and it will take you to their original interview so you can read the whole thing. We have so many fascinating authors that have connected with us at Pages from the Past! Thank you all!

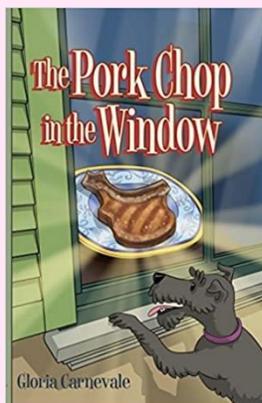


[Emily-Jane Orford](#)

There is a sequel to "Queen Mary's Daughter". My readers have asked for it and it's awaiting publication. I just signed the contract with CleanReads. "King Henry's Choice" picks up where "Queen Mary's Daughter" left off. I've also started an Arthurian fantasy/historical fiction story for young adults. I love the question 'what if' and it always sparks new ideas. In "Queen Mary's Daughter", I asked myself the question, "what if Mary Queen of Scots had another child, another heir to the Scottish throne?" For my Arthurian story, I've asked myself the question, "What if King Arthur really did have an heir?"

[Gini Grossenbacher](#)

I patterned the storyline on the tales I found based on the life of Arabella Ryan, later called "Belle" who married the gambler Charles Cora. She became a successful gold rush era madam in San Francisco in the 1850s. I found little trace of her youth in Baltimore, some mention of her in New Orleans, and a fairly complete story of her in San Francisco. I read between the lines in order to amplify several issues: the position of women; antebellum slavery; New Orleans Voodoo, and the role of the Chinese in America's cultural fabric.



[Gloria Caviglia](#)

*What challenges have you found with writing historical fiction?*

Getting it historically correct, and getting it published! It's difficult to do both because so many factors play a role in historical fiction. Is the clothing correct? The idiomatic language? What as the political climate? Should it be included? Is there too much sex? Not enough? As for the publishing piece, you just never know what will catch a publisher's eye.



### [Jennifer Wells](#)

Firstly a confession – I never set out to write a historical novel. Like many authors, my first inspiration most often comes from one powerful and dramatic scene that pops into my head while I am daydreaming, and the rest of the story develops around that.

In the case of my first novel, *THE LIAR*, the scene which inspired me featured a grieving mother who glimpses a face in a crowd – that of her daughter, a child she had believed dead. So was the child really her daughter? Well, I did not want to write a tedious story about the complexities of DNA analysis and court cases, so my story had to be set in a time before genetic testing and even the widespread knowledge of

blood groups. I settled on 1935 and once I got there I had a funny feeling that I had found home!

### [Jillian Chantal](#)

One thing that I always check is when words came into use. It annoys me when I have a great word that works so well in a sentence and then I find that it wasn't in use in that time frame. Then the quest is on for another word that may or may not be better. It's also hard to find careers for heroines. Most in the Regency era are either nobles, aristocracy, poor relations who have to be governesses, or maids and other household help. I took this as a challenge and wrote a story called *Scent of a Duke* and made the heroine an employee of a perfumer. It was a lot of fun to do.



### [Johanna Wittenberg](#)

*The Norse Queen* is based on the story of the semi-legendary Queen Åsa. The sources state that she avenged her father's murder and regained control of his kingdom. However, the written record was created 400 years after the fact, by Icelandic men whose culture was very different than Åsa's. Their society had turned against powerful women, so I had to take much of what they wrote with a grain of salt.

Åsa ruled for 20 years, apparently alone, but nothing has been recorded of her reign. The sources skip on to her son, Halfdan the Black, and her grandson, the famous Harald Fairhair. So, I took it upon myself to fill in those missing 20 years, starting with the second book, *The Falcon Queen*. I tried to imagine the first years of her reign. She was starting over with truly little after the devastation of her kingdom. Who were her enemies, and her allies? A woman ruling alone must have had to fend off attacks and marriage proposals from powerful men. How did

she develop the power to withstand them?





[Juliet Haines Mofford](#)

It was art that finally turned me onto history; studying pictures painted in the past.

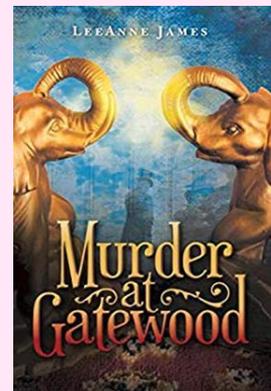
I remember visiting museums with my mother from the age of four, and her telling me "Touch with your eyes, not with your hands." Or she would say: "Pick your favorite painting in this room and act out what's happening in the picture." Spending several years traveling through Europe with its fabulous museums, was one of my life's great highlights.

Later, when I became a museum educator, my goal was to make history fun for kids. As Director of Education & Research at several different historical societies, developing and implementing programs that linked museum collections and sites with school curricula and communities was a major part of the job.

[LeAnn James](#)

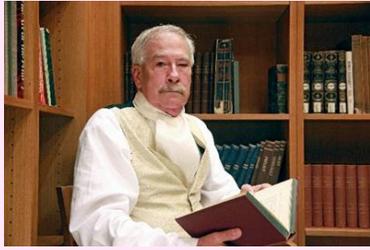
*Which did you choose first – the mystery storyline, or the time and setting?*

Actually, I had the ending first and then decided on the time and setting. I wanted the setting to revolve around the upper class where there were servants in the household and help in the fields. One of the main characters, the Duke, is miserable because he wants to work in the fields, to cultivate the land, and literally see the fruits of his labor. Unfortunately, a man of his station did not do manual labor, and it left him unhappy and angry.



[Linda Ulleseit](#)

When I was a little girl, my grandmother told me fabulous stories of my female ancestors. One dated Mark Twain. One was the keeper of a chest that came over on the Mayflower with ancestor William Brewster. A woman that was born at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, in 1835 is the feature of my current work in progress. My favorite stories, however, were the three women featured in *Under the Almond Trees*. Ellen VanValkenburgh ran her late husband's business while pregnant with her third child. Later, she fought for votes for women. Her relative, Emily Williams, was a well-known architect in California around the time of Julia Morgan. Ellen's granddaughter, Eva Walters, opened her own photography studio to pay for her daughter's college education. Each of these women fought for something they believed in and ended up blazing the way for future women. I admire them greatly and felt their story needed to be told.



### [Lindsay Downs](#)

As for why I currently write the different periods in history, I wanted the challenge of including actual historical events, whenever possible, into the stories. I am amazed at what I have learned in my research, many of which was never taught me when I was in school. I'm not sure exactly who do blame for the omissions. The history teachers or the school system in general. What I do know, we can't keep history from the students. Otherwise, they will not learn the truth.

It's been said that a historical or even contemporary author can bore their listeners to death with the facts learned during research and I can and have. For example- we learn about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and the sinking of the battleship USS Arizona. But, did you know the captain of another battleship, USS California, ordered the ship to be beached near the mouth of the harbor so Japanese submarines wouldn't be able to sneak in and torpedo American ships. That I learned during research for one of my Upson PI Mystery series books.

### [Lindsay Shayne](#)

With my creative writing background, I have written a number of stage plays and scripts. I've also watched a great deal of theatre and films. When I'm writing, I tend to view the scenes cinematographically, as though there is a camera sweeping across the prairies, or peeking through the grease-splattered glass of the farmhouse window. I also think about the five senses. What do those biscuits smell like when they come out of the oven? How do the birds' wings sound as they crackle through the reeds and brush surrounding the lake? What does the evening landscape look like bathed only in moonlight?



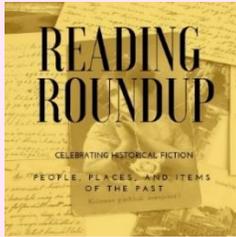
I also have a Masters in Archival Studies, and actually fell upon that discipline due to the amount of time I was spending in archives researching. I have a great affinity for the preservation of documentary heritage and can get lost for hours scouring through old images, journals, newspapers, and ledgers.



### [Linore Burkard](#)

Since I'd already written a number of Regencies, my research for this book (*Forever, Lately*) was more a brush up on past research. I did have to study certain things about the Maine setting, since the book goes back and forth from Maine to England, and I've only been to Maine once. But research today is so much easier than in the past. For my first books, I spent countless hours in the library and had to hunt down certain resources for more information. Nowadays, authors can find nearly everything they need online.

It's so easy to do a little homework, in fact, that it's pretty mind-boggling that I saw a recent "Regency" where the main character called her father "pa," (Um. No. That's American, not English usage and definitely not Regency. It is always "papa" with the accent on the second syllable.) This same book referred to money as "coppers" -- that is so NOT Regency. Obviously I didn't buy it after taking a peek. But to me, this is a lazy author, especially today when research is so widely available. (We historical authors tend to be picky about this sort of thing!)



# The 1700s & Before

## Shadow of the Lion

W. Ruth Kozak



When Alexander the Great, King of Macedon and conqueror of Asia, dies suddenly under suspicious circumstances at the age of 33 in Babylon, everyone who lives in his shadow is affected. As the after-shocks of Alexander's death bring disorder to his empire from Macedon to Persia, a deadly power struggle begins over who will rule.

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