



Vol. 2, No. 31, July 31, 2020

In this issue:

- New Releases: *The Lost Diary of Alexander Hamilton* and *Threading the Labyrinth*
- Short Story Contest
- Author Spotlight: Author Recap #3 (M-X)
- Reading Roundup: Books from the 1800s

From the Editor

This is the third week of our Author Recap, showcasing 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 highlights from our M – X authors.

There are a lot of new releases coming up. We may have been lock downed and quarantined, but authors kept plugging along and putting out the words - although I realize that much of the research and writing probably took place before Covid entered our world. We'll feature one to two new releases every week. Keep on the lookout!

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. I had a copy of of *The Roaring '20s* that could pair up as a gift for this great photo. Details for the short story contest follow, along with a cover copy of the magazine that will go to one lucky winner. **DEADLINE TO SUBMIT THE STORY IS AUGUST 8TH!**

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, Ruth Kozak, Renata Stankova, Tiffani Angus, and a lot more!

Trisha

texastrishafaye@yahoo.com

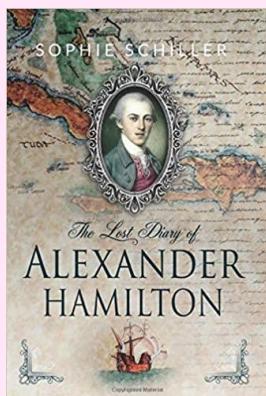
[Get Pages of the Past delivered to your inbox every Friday!](#)

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

New Releases

[The Lost Diary of Alexander Hamilton](#)

Sophie Schiller



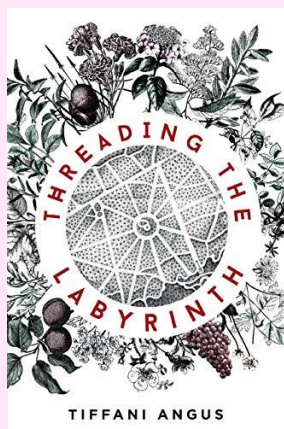
The story of one boy's struggle to survive amidst all odds in a land of sugar plantations, slavery, and smugglers, a boy who would one day grow up to be a Founding Father.

1765: Alexander Hamilton arrives with his family in St. Croix to begin a new life. He longs for the chance to go to school and fit in, but secrets from his mother's past threaten to turn him into a social outcast and tear his family apart. When he sees a young African slave being tortured, Alex vows to act. He urges his uncle to buy Ajax and promises to set him free. But tragedy strikes when his father abandons the family and his mother dies of yellow fever. Orphaned and alone, Alex is forced to survive by his wits. By day he works in a counting house learning the secrets of foreign trade. By night he reads Plutarch and dreams of fame and glory. When Ajax is sold to a brutal planter, Alex vows to save him, even at the risk of his own life. With the help of a reluctant slavecatcher, he concocts a plan to rescue Ajax, but when the price for helping a slave run away is torture or death, no one is safe.

In this gripping tale, Sophie Schiller re-creates the boyhood of the brilliant boy who would grow up to become a Founding Father and one of America's foremost men. Lovers of *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Treasure Island*, and *Johnny Tremain* will delight in this tropical adventure.

[Threading the Labyrinth](#)

Tiffani Angus



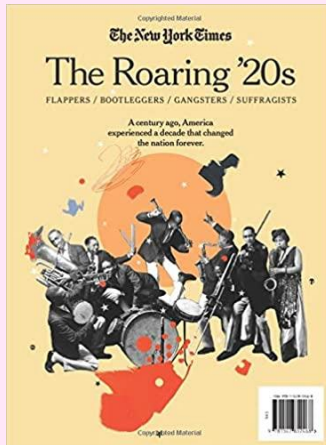
American owner of a failing gallery, Toni, is unexpectedly called to England when she inherits a manor house in Hertfordshire from a mysterious lost relative.

What she really needs is something valuable to sell, so she can save her business. But, leaving the New Mexico desert behind, all she finds is a crumbling building, overgrown gardens, and a wealth of historical paperwork that needs cataloguing.

Soon she is immersed in the history of the house, and all the people who tended the gardens over the centuries: the gardens that seem to change in the twilight; the ghost of a fighter plane from World War Two; the figures she sees in the corner of her eye.

A beautiful testament to the power of memory and space, *Threading the Labyrinth* tells the stories of those who loved this garden across the centuries, and how those lives still touch us today.

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 texasrishafrage@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 24th at midnight. The winner will be announced in the August 28th newsletter.

Use the photograph below as a prompt for your story.



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

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

Author Recap #3 (M-X)

This week we're taking a peek at some highlights from our M to X authors. 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!



[Madeline Tasky Sharples](#)

I used a lot of the information from the family history that my husband wrote some twenty-five years before I wrote *Papa's Shoes*. He had interviewed many elders in our family and used the writings of others. I became very intrigued with what my aunt – my father's sister – wrote about her life as a young girl when she was well into her eighties. That she wrote a whole page describing her friendship – as she called it – with a young gentile teacher named Merrill Faulk. He would pick her up at her family home and take her to school plays and concerts and then out for a bite afterward. She also wrote that her brother (my father) objected so strongly that he got the family to move to Chicago to get her away from this man who was not marriage material for an Orthodox Jewish young woman. And that she still even remembered his name and could describe his looks and the way he dressed after 64 years made me think she must have still carried a torch for him. While in real life she met and married a nice Jewish man, had two children, and lived the rest of her life in Chicago, I decided to write this book and get her together with her true love.

This information definitely changed my perception of what my father's and his sister's lives were really like. I found there was a lot more beneath the surface.

[Marilyn Pemberton](#)

As I said earlier, the seed was planted after I heard a radio program on the only recorded castrato. I let the seed germinate whilst I completed *The Jewel Garden*, and I played around with different points of view. I always knew that I wanted to follow the journey of two young boys and that one succeeded and one failed as a castrato. I initially thought that I would tell it from the unsuccessful boy's point of view, but I then thought that that would be too one-sided. I then hit upon the idea of writing it from someone else's point of view and I decided this would be the man responsible for taking them to be castrated, Philippe. I had written *The Jewel Garden* in the 1st person and this seems to be my natural style so I wrote *Song of the Nightingale* from the point of view of Philippe. I plotted it roughly, but as I wrote and the characters became more formed and I imagined what it would actually have been like to live the boys' lives, I changed the ending quite dramatically. The concept of success and failure came to mean a very different thing than I had originally thought.





[Marion Kummerow](#)

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.

[Mary Lingerfelt](#)

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.





[MT Maliha](#)

Some years ago, while out photographing for an art project, I stumbled across a beautiful gothic/castle like ruin that sat along The Hudson River. I was intrigued! I went home, researched the building and its history, and discovered that many famous people, including writers and the 'elite' had frequently been visitors to the amazing mansion on the river. They uniformly reported suffering melancholic feelings while visiting, and some refused to return. Some attributed their experiences to the wind along the river, and some blamed their unease on spirits that dwelled within the walls and grounds. How could I resist! I HAD to write about it. (As I state in the forward of my book, *Waverly Estate: Ghost Dance*, I had changed the names to protect the haunted)

[Nancy Bilyeau](#)

I am very proud of being descended from a Huguenot settler in what was then New Amsterdam in America. I came up with the idea for *The Blue* first—an espionage story set in an 18th-century porcelain factory—and then I went about creating the main character. When I read that Huguenots were involved in the founding of several important porcelain factories in England, a lightbulb went off. This was my opportunity to write a Huguenot character! I did write an early version in which Genevieve lived in New York, but nothing kills pacing like a two-month voyage across the Atlantic. The story had to be in England—there were no porcelain factories in America. So I jumped into researching the Huguenot community in London and in no time I had fallen in love with Spitalfields and the silk weavers of Georgian England.



[Pamela Nowak](#)

Getting buried in research, for sure. I love research and I have a fierce dedication to remaining true to historical fact. That desire to remain true to history can also make the story-craft more difficult. In historical romance, where I insert fictional characters into history or historical detail in a fictional plot, that's not such a big deal. But for my women's historical fiction, I am telling the stories of real women and that means I have to find the story within the history. If I know a fact to exist, I will not pretend that it doesn't exist.

So, what that means is that I can't plot around events or personalities. Laura Duley, in *NEVER LET GO*, was known to be biased and frequently depressed. My challenge was to motivate those beliefs and behaviors so that she was still someone readers would care about. As a fiction author, I do have the freedom to craft internal thoughts, dialogue, and goals. I can create scenes as long as they fit into known facts and don't change real events. That's freeing. But I also have a plot that can't be changed so I have to develop scenes to advance along that plotline while honoring character arcs. I have to develop my characters so they logically "drive" the plot.



[Peggy Harrison](#)

My foray into writing historical fiction was a complete accident. I write with a friend of 50 years who lives 5000 miles away, working on Skype. We started a writing project several years ago in an effort to spur a mutual friend to do what he kept saying he wanted to do: write. So far, we have published six books, while our friend has written not one word.

We decided to start by writing alternate paragraphs. Jay wrote the first one, long since lost, but it had something to do with a young couple hurrying along to see what had caused a loud noise. I put the couple in hide footwear, thereby hurtling them back in time to what turned out to be the copper age. We ended up with three books we call the Benchland Series: *Rockslide*, *Spirit Chamber*, and *Ring of Fire*.

[Sarah MacTavish](#)

My fascination with history started as a kid wanting to know everything about the Victorian Era, probably because of my American Girl doll, Samantha. And a lot of my favorite books to read were historical--*The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* by Avi, *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett, *Sarah Bishop* by Scott O'Dell, to name a few.

What I love about historical fiction is its ability to empathically transport you through time, put you in the shoes of someone who lived (or could have lived) in another era. It connects us to the past in a way that simple facts, names, and dates never could. I also believe that in order to make sense of the present, we have to know how we got here, and historical fiction is a great way to do just that.



[Sarah Zama](#)

Today, I'd never do serious research on the web, I always start from books. It's a lot faster, believe me. True, the web it's easy to peruse, and it answers our questions, but that's exactly its limit. Books give us entire universes. If I want to know when the Cupid Bow was invented, I can enter the question on Google and it will answer that kind of lip makeup was created by Max Factor in the early 1920s, probably for Clara Bow, but maybe for Joan Crawford. You may get some more spare info about makeup in the 1920s, maybe some info about Bow and Crawford, and then a lot of very similar info.

If I want to know about the Cupid Bow from a book, I'll need to get a book about the history of makeup, which will give me a comprehensive idea of how makeup changed over time. Or maybe I'll get a book about the 1920s in general, from which I'll additionally get info about the changing role of women, 1920s

fashion, the way makeup changed at that time because of scientific advances. Or I may get a book about youth in the 1920s, which will give me info about how makeup was just a portion of how young people change their attitude towards each other and toward older people. In short, to get to that specific detail, I'll journey through a lot of other information about that time, which will slowly sediment in my mind giving me a comprehensive, global feeling of the era, rather than just an answer to one question.



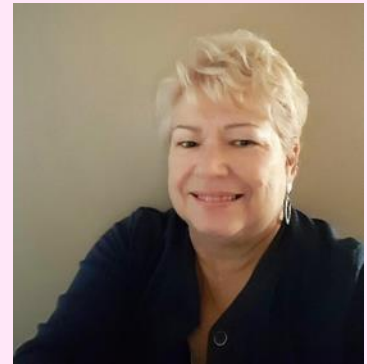
[Sharon Cathcart](#)

Oh, my goodness. I love Gilbert Rochambeau, in the "Seen Through the Phantom's Eyes" series. Gilbert was originally a minor character in the first novel, but he didn't want to be quiet! He let me see that he had a bigger role to play, and the entire series was better for it.

And then there's Amos Boudreaux, in "*Bayou Fire*." I think I was halfway in love with him by the time I finished writing the book. He's a bad boy hunk, but he's also a social reformer. He's smart, sexy, and complex. I really enjoyed creating him.

[Susanne Matthews](#)

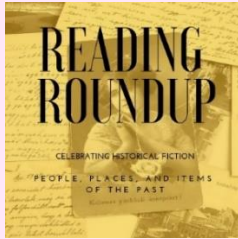
That's like asking a mother to pick her favorite child! My female characters don't follow the mold for the period. Yes, they're constrained by the reality of the times and their places in society, but they tend to think outside the box and find ways to avoid their intended fates. They are NOT simpering violets. My male characters are vibrant, dashing, but far from perfect. They love deeply, exclusively, and will sacrifice almost everything for the women they love. They're also deeply loyal to the colonies and the king, putting their duty ahead of their own wants and desires. I know this isn't exactly what you want, but I can't choose.



[Verne Albright](#)

My favorite is interviewing knowledgeable people because they usually have colorful details to pass along. Since I plan to continue setting most of my novels in Peru and have been there 65 times so far, I've had plenty of opportunities.

The disadvantage of this method is that I must stringently verify everything I'm told before using it, which can be difficult. But the advantage is that I get steered to little-known material my readers seem to find fascinating.

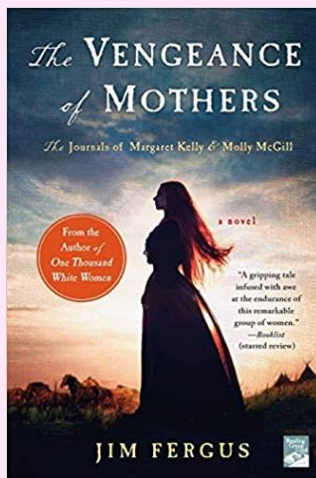


The 1800s

The Vengeance of Mothers:

The Journals of Margaret Kelly & Molly McGill

Jim Fergus



9 March 1876

My name is Meggie Kelly and I take up this pencil with my twin sister, Susie. We have nothing left, less than nothing. The village of our People has been destroyed, all our possessions burned, our friends butchered by the soldiers, our baby daughters gone, frozen to death on an ungodly trek across these rocky mountains. Empty of human feeling, half-dead ourselves, all that remains of us intact are hearts turned to stone. We curse the U.S. government, we curse the Army, we curse the savagery of mankind, white and Indian alike. We curse God in his heaven. Do not underestimate the power of a mother's vengeance...

So begins the Journal of Margaret Kelly, a woman who participated in the U.S. government's "Brides for Indians" program in 1873, a program whose conceit was that the way to peace between the United States and the Cheyenne Nation was for One Thousand White Women to be given as brides in exchange for three hundred horses. These "brides" were mostly fallen women; women in prison, prostitutes, the occasional adventurer, or those incarcerated in asylums. No one expected this program to work. And the brides themselves thought of it simply as a chance at freedom. But many of them fell in love with their Cheyenne spouses and had children with them...and became Cheyenne themselves.

The Vengeance of Mothers explores what happens to the bonds between wives and husbands, children and mothers, when society sees them as "unspeakable." What does it mean to be white, to be Cheyenne, and how far will these women go to avenge the ones they love? With vivid detail and keen emotional depth, Jim Fergus brings to light a time and place in American history and fills it with unforgettable characters who live and breathe with a passion we can relate to even today.

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

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