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## From the Editor

A new treasure entered my life Tuesday – *Little House in the Ozarks*, by Laura Ingalls Wilder. I went into Haslet Library to drop off two bags of books and a baby blanket for Project Linus. Of course, one *must* browse the books in the foyer that the Friends have for sale. It's almost like a rule. Right?

This new (to me) book is a great find for three reasons.

First, where else can you buy a hardcopy book for fifty cents? For a grand total of \$1.75, I came home with six books. Such a deal!

Secondly, the historical details in this book (A Laura Ingalls Wilder Sampler – The Rediscovered Writings) are priceless. Here's just a small snippet of an article she wrote in February 1911, entitled 'The March of Progress.'

Conditions have changed so much in the country within the last few years that we country women have no need to envy our sisters in the city. We women on the farm no longer expect to work as our grandmothers did.

With the high prices to be had for all kinds of timber and wood, we now do not have to burn wood to save the expense of fuel, but can have our oil stove, which makes the work so much cooler in the summer, so much lighter and cleaner. There need be no carrying in of wood and carrying out of ashes, with the attendant dirt, dust, and disorder.

Our cream separator saves us hours formerly spent in setting and skimming milk and washing pans, besides saving the large amount of cream that was lost in the old way.

Then there is the gasoline engine. Bless it! Besides doing the work of a hired man outside, it can be made to do the pumping of water and the churning, turn the washing machine, and even run the sewing machine.

Lastly, what I was most excited about was to learn about her earlier writings. This week I just submitted a piece to *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books. (Don't hold your breath waiting for my announcement of being accepted! It's the 12<sup>th</sup> piece I've submitted to no avail since they accepted my one and only story in 2016.) I submitted an essay on aging, Embracing 60, and in it I referenced several people that had accomplished wonderful feats after the age of sixty. I'd listed Laura Ingalls Wilder as not writing her first novel until she was 64, with her last book published when she was 76.

But what I found in this book was that although her *first book was published* when she was 64 that is *not* when she first started writing. For more than twenty years before she wrote *Little House on the Prairie*, she was writing articles for Missouri farm papers and national magazines. There's about 150 articles and essays in here that she wrote in the 1910s and 1920s.

I'd love to settle into a chair right now and devour the whole book. But I've got a plane to catch in the morning. I'm off to visit my mom and sister (and a niece and a few nephews) in Utah tomorrow. (Actually today, Friday, when you received this.) And I can't take it on the plane with me – I'll be working on edits instead. But next week Laura – you and I have a date so I can dive into these fascinating writings that I didn't know about until now.

But before your mind drifts off to the years at the turn of the century – read ahead. Today we have an interview with author Barbara Ridley about her book set during World War 2 – *When It's Over*.

I hope you all have a wonderful – and equally fortuitous – week!

*Trisha*

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## A Zeb, a Zitella, and a Zawster Walked into a Bar...

Yes, I'm taking many liberties with today's 'Z' themed article. I'll have to admit, I was stumped. I've been working my way through the alphabet and had a theme for each week – until I got to this week's 'Z' topic. I had nothing. Nada. Zilch. (Ah, there's a Z word. I could have gone with that.)

So I did what any writer at a loss does. I went to google. Google - what historical fiction words begin with Z? Nothing useful showed up. I bemoaned the fact that I no longer own a print dictionary. How easy it would have been to pull a print volume off the shelf, open it at the back and run my finger down the columns of Z words until I found one that would suffice.

Next, I tried a search for 'List of Z words' and came up with pages and pages of odd and unusual words good for a Scrabble game. While they would score me some awesome points if I were in the middle of a competitive game, it wasn't very useful for what I was looking for.

Then I hit pay-dirt (pardon the cliché, which we aren't supposed to use) when I found this post from a few years ago.

### 40 Zesty Z-Words To Add To Your Vocabulary

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/70627/40-zesty-z-words-add-your-vocabulary>

The author, Paul Anthony Jones, shared that Z is "one of the least frequently used letters in the English language". I think many of us know this, especially if you've ever participated in the April A to Z Blog Challenge. He also wrote:

"It might be one of the least-frequently used letters in the English language (you can expect it to start less than 0.5% of the words in a standard dictionary), but the letter Z is responsible for some fantastic words, from zaptieh (that's a Turkish police officer) to zardozi (a type of

embroidery using metallic thread), and from zambomba (a Spanish percussion instrument) to zalambdodont (a creature with V-shaped ridged molar teeth).

As great as those words are, they're not exactly the most useful of Z-words to drop into everyday conversation, depending of course on how many people with V-shaped molars you know."

But what I found intriguing, was how many of the forty words he used in his post could relate to the earlier time periods of many historical writers. Here are a few from his list of 40.

#### 1. ZABERNISM

A German-origin word for the overuse or unnecessarily aggressive use of military power; to zabernize likewise is to oppress militarily. Both words are named for the town of Saverne in Alsace, eastern France, where a young cobbler was needlessly killed by a German soldier in 1912.

#### 2. ZACK

An old southern English dialect word meaning "to walk hesitantly."

#### 7. ZARNDER

Popular in the early 1900s, a zarnder was a woman's loose ringlet of hair worn over one shoulder. It derives from a slang corruption of the name of Queen Alexandra, the wife, and consort of King Edward VII, who popularized the style.

#### 8. ZAWN

An isolated sandy inlet or cave in a coastal cliff is a zawn.

#### 9. ZAWSTER

An old 18th-century word for a seamstress or dressmaker.

#### 14. ZELOTYPIA

Derived from the Greek word for "to strike," zelotypia is a 17th-century word for what we would now more likely call jealousy.

#### 20. ZITELLA

Derived from Italian, zitella is a 17th-century word for a young girl or maiden.

#### 22. ZNEESY

An 18th-century slang word for cold, frosty weather. No one is quite sure where it comes from, but it's likely partly influenced by sneezy.

#### 24. ZOB

Early 1900s slang for a fool or a simpleton.

#### 28. ZODIKERS

Zodikers, zonkers, zooners, zooks and zookers are all old fashioned exclamations of surprise or amazement, popular from the mid-17th to late-19th centuries. They're all descended from the earlier expression Gadzooks, which is itself a euphemistic corruption of "God's hooks," the nails used to secure Jesus to the cross.

#### 34. ZUCHE

A 14th-century word for a tree stump.

### 37. ZWODDER

According to one 19th century dictionary, a zwodder is “a drowsy and stupid state of mind.” Monday morning, in other words.

While we’re on the subject of old words and phrases, one topic that arises in my writer’s group quite often is ‘was that word, or phrase, used then?’ As much as I bemoan how cell phones have taken over our lives and are so (too) prominent in social occasions, it does come in handy. Once the question is uttered, out pop the phones and within a minute or two someone has an answer.

For instance, in a 1920s story, I might have a character saying, “A penny for your thoughts.”

When questioned about my use of the phrase – which is a legitimate question, because I don’t really know myself – we found this. [The Phrase Finder](#), a UK based site, reveals:

“The first known use of it is by Sir Thomas More in *A Treatyce upon the last thynges*, circa 1535...

In such wise yt not wtoute som note & reproch of suche vagaraunte mind, other folk sodainly say to them: a peny for your thought.

...The expression became so well used that it was often shortened to 'a penny for them' or even just 'penny', as in H. G. Wells' novel *Love & Mr. Lewisham*, 1900:

‘Penny,’ she said after an interval. Lewisham started and looked up. ‘Eh?’.

It is less common in the 21st century and more used by the older generation than the young.”

And, as an aside, I am *thrilled* that I don’t have to read much text from the 1500s!

Another word that seems to come into question in groups is the use of the word ‘glasses’. [The Online Etymology Dictionary](#) says the use of glasses, or spectacles, is from the 1660s, derived from the plural of glass. What I thought was amusing was how the use of ‘sunglasses’ appeared much earlier than I would have thought. I would have thought sunglasses came into use about the 1950s or 1960s. Was I wrong! From about 1878, ‘sun-glasses’ were “glasses with darkened lenses to protect one’s eyes while observing the sun.” But they became popular for non-astronomy use from 1916.

And, ‘four-eyes’? Ah, I know that hated phrase. After getting glasses in the third grade, I heard that ugly named called in my direction too much for my liking. Imagine my surprise when I saw that this slang term first came into use around 1874!

Another interesting site is [A General Dictionary of Provincialisms](#), written by William Holloway. Original publication date in 1840.

On that final note, I’ll leave you to ponder the zaniness of some of these zesty ‘Z’ words. I’m off to go figure out how to work a zob into one of my short stories.

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Barbara Ridley is a member of the Pages of the Past Facebook group. One day she shared a post with the group that talked about she was able to use parts of her mother's experiences as a refugee from the Holocaust in her book. Being a writer who has used many of her own family stories in my posts, short stories, and books, I was excited to see someone keeping their families memories alive. Many of the authors here in the group have done the same.

It reminds me of one of my favorite quotes. In *Finding Your Voice, Telling Your Stories*, Carol LaChapelle wrote: "...people die twice: when they physically die, and when we stop telling stories about them."

Join Barbara as she keeps her mother alive by basing her book, *When It's Over*, on many of her mother's memories.



**Welcome, Barbara. You shared one of your posts with us in the Pages of the Past group. Reading it, I was fascinated with how you used parts of your mother's experiences as a refugee from the Holocaust in your book. Can you share a little bit with us about how these poignant memories from your mother ended up working into the plot and characters of *When It's Over*?**

*When It's Over* is definitely based on my mother's story, and I integrated many anecdotes I remember her telling me over the years. But when I decided to record her story, I realized there were many gaps in my knowledge: details she never discussed, and certainly the emotional impact of her experience which she never divulged. So I chose to fictionalize the story, giving me the freedom to make up what I didn't know. In the novel, the basic arc of Lena, my protagonist, is closely based on my mother's story, but ultimately I have to say I did not think of Lena as my mother. Lena is a very young woman, coming of age, going through a sexual awakening, and involved in a romantic triangle. Writing these scenes, I wasn't imagining my mother, but a character I created based on her story. However, I had a lot of fun weaving in little snippets or anecdotes that I remember her telling me, and on those occasions, I could hear her voice coming through on the page.

**You mentioned that you had an oral interview that you'd recorded of your mother about twenty years before her death. You had the cassette tape transcribed and used this document while you were writing your book. What was it like reading her words so many years later, knowing that her words and memories would be inscribed into a fictional character, keeping a small segment of her alive forever?**

That was my main motivation for writing the book, to keep her story alive. When she died, a very close friend, a woman I had known all my adult life, knowing my mother was Czech, asked me how exactly my mother had ended up in England. When I started to tell her the story, she said: that's amazing, it sounds like a novel! It took me a few years to start working on it, and then I remembered the tape and had it transcribed. That document formed my first outline, and I returned to it many times in the writing. It helped keep her experience alive for me. But I had recorded the interview on a 90-minute cassette tape—remember those?—and unfortunately, the interview came to an abrupt end when the tape ran out, just as she was getting to some interesting details about her boyfriend with whom she had fled Czechoslovakia. I knew very little about this guy, and she rarely talked about him. So I had to completely fictionalize his character and that part of the story in the novel.

**Many of us spend countless hours combing through books and the internet in search of elusive details to incorporate into our historical fiction. You found a treasure trove – boxes of letters your father wrote during the last two years of the war. What was that like, discovering that treasure and how did it change the course of *When It's Over*?**

Yes, it was an amazing find. These were some of the thousands of letters my father had written over the years to his closest friend, who graciously allowed me to keep those from the war period. At first, I was very excited because I thought this might help me learn more about how my parents first got involved with each other. I knew this was after my mother arrived in England and that it must have been while she was still married to her first husband, but this was not something they ever talked about. So initially I was excited to comb through the letters and see what light they might shed on my parents' relationship. But I learned that men in the 1940's did not talk about personal stuff in their correspondence! Instead, I discovered a wealth of information on the political situation in Britain during the last two years of the war, and in particular the progressive movement that led to the dramatic defeat of Churchill in the election of 1945, ushering in Britain's first Labour government. So I incorporated a new plot element into the second part of the novel; my character Milton becomes absorbed in this political movement while Lena is anxiously awaiting news of her Jewish family left behind in Prague.

**Were there any other unusual resources you uncovered?**

I had one research question that I struggled with, that I could not get answered with any of my online research, nor any other published sources that I could find. My mother, like Lena in the novel, was stuck in Paris when war broke out, unable to get an entry permit to join her boyfriend and many other friends from Prague who had reached England. When she finally was successful—no spoilers here, so I won't reveal how this happened—she traveled from Paris to London by plane in March 1940, the first time she had ever flown. I wanted to know what kind of aircraft this would have been. But all my research stated that there were no civilian flights out of France after the war started in September 1939. I knew this could not be correct. I eventually discovered a funky little British Aviation Museum close to Heathrow airport, and a dedicated curator who rummaged through his files to find the answer. Civilian flights were indeed suspended in September 1939 but then resumed in November, in the period of the so-called "phony war", when there was no action on the Western front, and flights continued until the fall of France in June 1940.

My mother would have flown in a 22-passenger Frobisher plane. I left the museum with photographs of the aircraft, both exterior and interior, and the flight schedule.

**You have a variety of short stories published, along with your book *When It's Over* that's set in Europe during WWII. Do you have a favorite era to write in? What do you enjoy most about that era?**

One of my published stories was based on a chapter of the novel *When It's Over*, but apart from that, all my other writing is contemporary, including my second novel which I hope to complete soon, set in California, and based on my years of clinical experience working with people with disabilities. But many readers have asked me if I am working on a sequel to *When It's Over*. I don't know about a sequel, but I do love the WWII era and became so immersed in it while doing the research, that I am considering writing something else set at that time, perhaps involving some of the minor characters from *When It's Over*. I think WWII is so rich in that it affected so many aspects of life, on so many different frontiers. It's far enough in the past to be a completely different era, yet feels understandable and relatable for me.

**With so many true family events used in your book, what measures did you take to mitigate any potential problems?**

I was fortunate in the sense that by the time the novel was published, the family members on whom the characters were based had all passed away, so there really was no one left to take offense. My father's friend who gave me the letters is still alive—at the age of 100—and he gave me valuable feedback throughout my writing process, pointing out anachronisms I had unwittingly included. He said that my character Otto, based on my mother's boyfriend but completely fictionalized, bore little resemblance to the man he remembered, but he understood poetic license and agreed it worked for the story. Family members of my generation and younger have responded very positively to the novel, feeling it has given them insight into aspects of my mother's background that they never knew—because she rarely spoke of it.

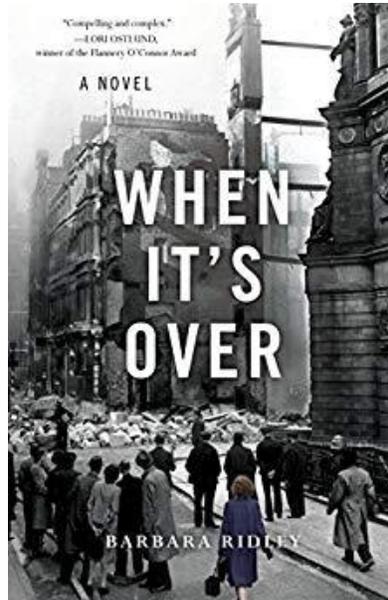
**What challenges did you have to overcome while writing *When It's Over*?**

Mostly, I was still working then in a very demanding job, so my writing had to be squeezed in on evenings and weekends and on my vacations. I was such a novice, and the early drafts of my opening chapters were pretty awful—laden with backstory and over-wrought prose. So I had a lot to learn about the writing process. It took me six years to complete the first draft of the novel, and then I spent another three years revising and editing. And I had to do a lot of research along the way. The novel covers a time span of seven very eventful years, so I often found myself side-lined by the need to understand certain events or details of daily life. Like any writer of historical fiction, I struggled with how much background research to include and knowing when some gorgeous tidbit I had discovered had to be tossed.

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

There are so many novels set during the WWII era, but I believe *When It's Over* offers some unique insights into life on the home front in England. Readers have told me they felt immersed, transported back to that time, and were surprised to learn, for example, about the internment of "enemy aliens": refugees who had fled Nazi Germany and who were then imprisoned by the British. Or how there were protests and strikes throughout the war. We tend to think of the Brits hunkering down in the air raid shelters sipping tea and "carrying on". And they did all that for sure. But they were also determined to have all their sacrifices mean something, and work toward a better society once the war was over, with education,

housing and health care for all. The novel tries to capture this. I love historical fiction for what it can teach us about the past, the stuff we never learned in school. And I believe there are themes in *When It's Over* that resonate in our own time, as we confront the world-wide refugee crisis and the rise of authoritarian governments on every continent.



You can get *When It's Over* here:

[Indiebound](#)

[Amazon](#)

[Book Passage](#)

You can find Barbara here:

<https://www.facebook.com/BarbaraRidleyAuthor/>

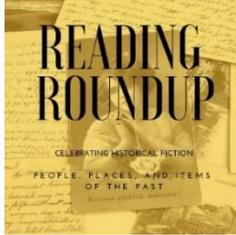
[https://twitter.com/barbara\\_ridley](https://twitter.com/barbara_ridley)

<https://www.instagram.com/barbara.ridley.author/>

Barbara Ridley was born in England but has lived in California for over 35 years. After a successful career as a nurse practitioner, she is now focused on creative writing. Her debut novel, *When It's Over*, (She Writes Press, 2017), set in Europe during WWII, was a Finalist in six awards, including the 2018 IBPA Benjamin Franklin Awards, and the Next Generation Indie Book Awards. Her work has also appeared in *Writers Workshop Review*, *Ars Medica*, *The Copperfield Review*, *Blood and Thunder* and *Stoneboat*, among other places. She is completing a second novel set in contemporary California.

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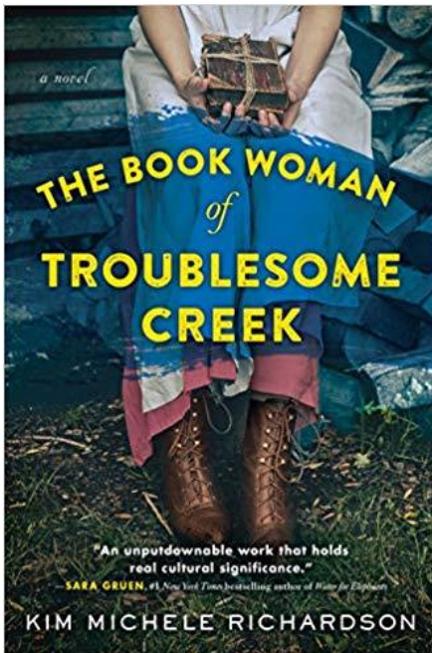
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## The 1930s

### The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek

**Kim Michele Richardson**



The hardscrabble folks of Troublesome Creek have to scarp for everything—everything except books, that is. Thanks to Roosevelt's Kentucky Pack Horse Library Project, Troublesome's got its very own traveling librarian, Cussy Mary Carter. Cussy's not only a book woman, however, she's also the last of her kind, her skin a shade of blue unlike most anyone else. Not everyone is keen on Cussy's family or the Library Project, and a Blue is often blamed for any whiff of trouble.

If Cussy wants to bring the joy of books to the hill folks, she's going to have to confront prejudice as old as the Appalachias and suspicion as deep as the holler.

Inspired by the true blue-skinned people of Kentucky and the brave and dedicated Kentucky Pack Horse library service of the 1930s, *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* is a story of raw courage, fierce strength, and one woman's belief that books can carry us anywhere—even back home.

*Authors: Do you have a historical fiction book or short story that you'd like featured in Pages of the Past? Email me at [texastrishafaye@yahoo.com](mailto:texastrishafaye@yahoo.com) to see about scheduling your book or short story in a future issue.*

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