



Pages of the Past

CELEBRATING
HISTORICAL FICTION

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From the Editor

Hello and Happy Friday my historical fiction lover friends!

I had a delightful lunch with two friends from one of my writing groups yesterday. The conversation turned to cats, as two of the three of us have cats. (One of us more than the other, but I'm not saying which one!) From there, she mentioned a cat sign she has that references the old hobo 'signs' of days long past. At first, I didn't know what she was talking about, but as she explained, I remembered reading something about that many years ago.

It was about how the hoboies used to leave 'signs' for one another, letting the others know if it was a friendly house where they might find food or drink, or if it was a house to avoid as they weren't amenable to the travelers. It reminded me how often these tidbits from the past sneak into our everyday conversation. It must be the common thread that binds us historical fiction readers/authors together – this love of the past.

Join us this week as we chat with author Heather Osborne, the author of several different series. Stay tuned for future issues –In the weeks ahead we have author interviews scheduled with Sophie Schiller, Hannah Byron, Lindsay Downs, James Conroyd Martin, Janet Oakley, Eileen Donovan and a lot more!

Trisha

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Keeping the Memories Alive



It's always fun as an author when we can use elements of our family history as part of our writing. It feels like you're keeping a small memory of your beloved ancestors alive – at least in a small fragment. Others may not realize that they've read something that was inspired by a family member past, but you as the author know.

I'm finding out that I'm not the only one that enjoys this small tribute to our loved ones. In a guest post – [Mom and Dad May Be Gone but They Live on in My Series](#) - author Lindsay Downs shared about how characteristics of his parents live on in his Upson PI mysteries. (Lindsay is the featured author in *Pages of the Past* on 4/19/19 and 5/29/20. He'll also return in November to talk about his newest release.)

You'd think that writing further back in time, say in the time of Mary Queen of Scots, it wouldn't be possible to include family snippets. Not true. Author Emily-Jane Hills Orford, in writing *Queen Mary's Daughter*, was able to use characteristics of her beloved grandmother for the grandmother in the tale. In the debut issue of [Pages of the Past](#), Emily-Jane shared how her grandmother was a factor in her historical interests. In her author spotlight, she shares:

“I have always been fascinated with the life and times of Mary Queen of Scots and Queen Elizabeth I. Once again, this was a shared interest with my grandmother.”

In my own writing, pieces of family history and characters have been used here and there. One of my Vintage Daze Short Stories I was working on ended up being the most fun when Grandpa Jones (deceased since 1976) pushed his way into the story.

Two small 1928 cookbooks were the original inspiration for *'The Best Thing Since Sliced Bread.'* One I'd purchased in an antique store and one I'd inherited from one of the elderly women that lived next door to us when I was a child. That's all I knew about the story – is that it would be set in 1928.

I researched events in 1928 to see if there was anything I could work into the story. I saw that in Chillicothe Missouri, the first loaf of sliced bread came out that year. My Grandpa Jones grew up in a small town, Dawn, outside of Chillicothe and his brother, Uncle Scott, had a farm outside Chillicothe where my mom

and Aunt Ida were born. Voila! I had the place. The vague outline of a young flapper girl and her quest for cooking began to form.

I also saw that Chillicothe held a popular Chevrolet Day that year. And I read that that's the year the Hall Brothers Company, in Kansas City, changed their name to their trademarked Hallmark, and started using the new Hallmark logo on their cards. Since I work part time for Hallmark, I knew I wanted to include this part, so the young flapper, Luetta, instantly got herself a boyfriend that just happened to work for Hall Brothers.

The story had been 'brewing' for several weeks and I was a few scenes into it when I happened to be talking to my mom one afternoon. I was telling her about the new story idea and where it was set. "Grandpa would have been a young boy in 1928 though?" I asked.

"Oh, no. He was born in 1908, so he would have been twenty years old."

"Twenty years old? So, if Chillicothe had a Chevrolet Day, he would have been there then?"



"Absolutely," she replied. "He was a Chevy man his whole life. That's all he ever drove. I'm sure he would have been there." Mom continued to tell me a family story that Grandpa had repeated many times throughout his later years. He was driving through town – in a Chevy – and had one arm around the girl in the car. (Pre-Grandma Jones' days) The constable pulled him over and said, "Casey, you need to use both hands." Grandpa, the smart-alecky young man that he was, responded, "But, officer, I need one hand to drive with."

Well, Luetta already had a boyfriend, but now – how to work a young Grandpa Jones into the tale? Luetta's best friend, Amanda, had to meet Casey so I could work this family story in.

A short time later, my cousin – not knowing I was working on this story- texted me one morning about another Grandpa Jones story. Uncle Alvin had shared about when Grandpa was running a trunk load of moonshine up from Arkansas to Missouri, stowed in the trunk and covered with armloads of hay. He was stopped and the officer said his lights were out. Grandpa played dumb like he didn't know.

The officer opened the trunk asked, "What's with all the hay?" Grandpa replied, "Why, officer, you feed animals with it." And the officer closed the trunk and Grandpa went on his way.

Yes, that was written into the short story too. In real life, the Grandpa I knew was such a quiet, unassuming man. Yet here he is forty years later getting a little pushy from the afterlife, pushing his way into the story. No one else will know as they read that these two parts are real-life tales, from a Grandpa's younger days so long ago. But I'll know and feel good about keeping a small part of his history alive.

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Author Spotlight: Heather Osborne

This week we feature Heather Osborne, another multi-talented author that writes across a cross-section of genres. Grab a nice cup of tea and settle in to read about Heather's writing journey.



Welcome to Pages of the Past, Heather Osborne. You write in a variety of genres, but today we're chatting with you about your historical romances. Two of your earlier books, *Crossing Paths* and *Verboten* were written during World War II era. Can you tell us a little about them?

Hi, thanks for having me! *Crossing Paths* and *Verboten* are actual two short stories. They were the first shorts I published when I began my self-publishing journey in 2013. *Crossing Paths* follows a young girl who is adopted into a family after being found wandering the countryside. She later discovers a secret about her past that will change all she knows. *Verboten* is about a young woman in the Lodz Ghetto who forms a romantic relationship with a Nazi soldier.

What prompted you to write those short stories and set them during the World War II years?

I've always had an interest in WWII Europe, particularly the Holocaust. Writing both seemed like a safe way to start my exploration into self-publishing.

From World War II, your next books jumped back further in time to the Civil War Era. How did you make the transition from WWII to Civil War writing?

My father is a Civil War reenactor and he shared with me several articles about women disguising themselves as men during the war to go and fight. I became more interested in the topic the more I read and decided to write a book.

You wrote *The Soldier's Secret: An American Civil War Historical Romance* about northerner Emma Mansfield, in an unusual situation. Can you tell us about Emma and how she became part of the story you wanted to share?

Emma evolved out of conversations with my dad about women who went to fight during the Civil War. This was the first full-length historical novel I had written, and I wanted a heroine that was brave and bucked the norms of society at the time. It seemed like a perfect fit.

You followed up *The Soldier's Secret* with a sequel, *Simple Blessings*. As a writer, did you find that writing a sequel differed from writing the original tale?

I found that writing a sequel was easier than writing the original novel because all the characters had been fleshed out. It was simple from there to tie the story in with parts of *The Soldier's Secret* and bring some closure to some of the unexplored stories of the characters.

***Simple Blessings* features the Mansfield/McCafferty family as they celebrate their first Christmas together after the end of the American Civil War. You have another Christmas short story, *Tin Memories*, that is also leads to a family's past that harkens back to the American Civil War. With Christmas fast approaching us in 2020, can you share a little about what Christmas would have been like in this period from the past?**

I wrote a blog entry on this very topic, which can be found here:

<https://heatherosborneauthor.com/2016/12/01/christmas-during-the-american-civil-war/>

Christmas at the time would have been much like we see it today, however there was the added sadness that any of the men and boys fighting in the war would not come home. Presents were exchanged, carols sung, and trees decorated. Letters were scarce, and often soldiers would convey their feelings in journals. Cards were not all that common. However, families made the best of their situations and tried to have some joy during the holiday season.

Two of your more recent books take the reader back to post-Revolution France in the Du Cormier Saga: *Bitter Bonds* and *Bitter Destiny* (the prequel to *Bitter Bonds*). What was it like researching an even earlier time of the past? Did you run across any challenges to researching for these books?

I immensely enjoyed exploring the South before the Civil War, especially in Louisiana, which bounced back and forth from the Spanish to the French, before the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. I found it very interesting that many merchant class people from the French Revolution fled to Louisiana and were often treated with suspicion. It was so informative learning how society and politics worked in the years leading up to the Civil War.

Bitter Bonds was actually sparked by a storyline in one of my crime series, The Rae Hatting Mysteries book Misfortune. That is what was the catalyst for writing out the entire story of Adrienne and Henri.

I see that there's one more book in the works, I believe with a publication date in the near future. *Divided Destiny* is part of the Du Cormier Saga. Can you tell us about *Divided Destiny* and let us know when we can look for it?

Divided Destiny takes place during the American Civil War, following the journey of Remi, who is the son of Adrienne's sister, Francine (I won't spoiler the storyline of *Bitter Bonds*, though!). He finds himself torn between his roots in Louisiana and his beliefs that slavery is wrong. His journey parallels that of a young woman, Geneviève Montagnac, a maid in a familiar boarding house in New Orleans. Readers of *Bitter Destiny* will recognize the tie here when they read the story. She has unexpected ties to Remi's family. There has been a lot of research going into this novel—the Blockade of New Orleans by the Union Navy, as well as several lesser battles in Louisiana—so I'm very excited to put it all together. I am hoping to publish in the Spring of 2021.

Pages of the Past is about historical fiction, so we typically keep our topics and questions to the past. But I know that most of our readers read in other genres too. And you, also, write in different genres. Besides your historical romances, you have two series of contemporary crime novels out also: 'Inspector Briana Ryu' and 'Rae Hatting Mysteries'. For those that may be interested in checking those series out, could you tell us a little bit about each?

Certainly! Rae Hatting does have ties to *Bitter Bonds*, as I mentioned before, through the second novel in the series, *Misfortune*, which takes place in Louisiana. The series focuses on two FBI agents as they work to solve the unsolvable, stretching from California to New York. It culminated in three novels and two short stories. I never say never, so there may be more coming, but I've chosen to focus on other projects for the time being.

Inspector Briana Ryu is with the San Francisco Police Department. In her first novel, *Trafficked Dreams*, she fights against the clock to track down the sister of a murdered boy, both of whom had been trafficked into the country from Ukraine. The second novel, *Castro Nights*, is currently in the works and will be about a serial killer who is preying on gay men in San Francisco's Castro District. That is due out in December 2020.

Thank you for joining us today, Heather. 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 get Heather Osborne's books here:

Bitter Destiny: <http://mybook.to/BitterDestiny>

Bitter Bonds: <http://mybook.to/BitterBonds>

The Soldier's Secret: <http://mybook.to/SoldiersSecret>





You can find Heather Osborne here:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HAOsborne>

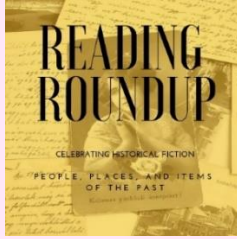
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Website: <https://heatherosborneauthor.com>

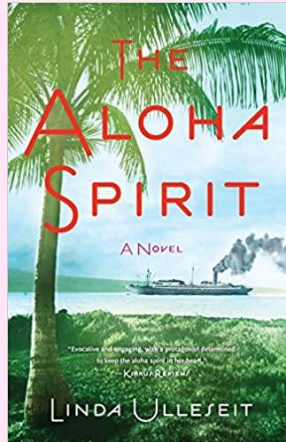
BIO: Heather Osborne, an author of crime and historical novels, was born and raised in California. She has a Bachelor of Science in Criminology and Victimology. In 2009, she moved to Scotland. Along with her novels and short stories, Heather also has written and directed several plays. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, writing (of course!), and theatre, as well as caring for her young son. Among her published titles are: *The Soldier's Secret*, a historical romance set during the American Civil War; *Bitter Bonds*, a tale of black magic in the deep South in the 1840s, *Orchestrating Murder*, a dark psychological thriller, and the Rae Hatting Mysteries series.

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The 1940s



The Aloha Spirit

Linda Ulleseit

Linda Ulleseit was our guest author on August 21. You can [check out her interview here](#) to read about the background of Aloha Spirit and discover some fascinating information about the spirit of Aloha.

The spirit of aloha is found in Hawaii's fresh ocean air, the flowers, the trade winds . . . the natural beauty that smooth the struggles of daily life. In 1922 Honolulu, unhappy in the adoptive family that's raised her, Dolores begins to search for that spirit early on—and she begins by running away at sixteen to live with her newlywed friend Maria.

Trying to find her own love, Dolores marries a young Portuguese man named Manolo. His large family embraces her, but when his drinking leads to physical abuse, only his relative Alberto comes to her rescue—and sparks a passion within Dolores that she hasn't known before. Staunch Catholics can't divorce, however; so, after the Pearl Harbor attack, Dolores flees with her two daughters to California, only to be followed by both Manolo and Alberto. In California, Manolo's drinking problems continue—and Alberto's begin. Outraged that yet another man in her life is turning to the bottle for answers, Dolores starts to doubt her feelings for Alberto. Is he only going to disappoint her, as Manolo has? Or is Alberto the embodiment of the aloha spirit she's been seeking?

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