

THE AUTHORS SHOW – Authors of Fiction

Author: D. L. Rogers

My writing career began in fifth grade when I tried to write a “Nancy Drew” style mystery, but it didn’t progress as planned. Writing on the front porch of my childhood home, I managed two chapters before I gave up. In my early 30’s I tried to write a “Red Dawn” type novel, again without success. There were too many characters that got lost in my life as a mother with children. In my late 30’s I gave it one last try—and succeeded.

When I became serious about my writing career, I wrote several novels in different genres to “discover” in which one I wanted to write. After completing a historical fiction, a romance and something dark I can’t even name, I decided what I wanted most was to write historical fiction. I wanted to tell the stories of our past that are being forgotten, changed and white-washed to suit today’s PC society. History happened as it happened and I write it AS it happened. I weave my characters into already recorded history to create their stories within the fabric of that history.

Upon completing TOMORROW’S PROMISE: Survival on the Plains, BROTHERS BY BLOOD and, finally, GHOST DANCERS, it was time to find a publisher. I contacted Gardenia Press, a small publishing house in Wisconsin, and was accepted after a difficult phone interview. Excited beyond imagination that I had been accepted by a “real” publisher, I had a website created, a cover was designed and I began lining up potential buyers to prove I meant to sell the books Gardenia produced. I bought a plane ticket to attend a conference on the east coast as a Gardenia Press author. I was devastated when the main principal suddenly passed away and the remaining partner decided to close Gardenia’s doors. In the blink of an eye, I was back to square one. Writing query letters. Waiting. Writing more query letters and more waiting. I couldn’t do it. I cried for a month. I just didn’t have it in me to start all over again. So I did the next best thing. I self-published at a time when self-published authors were looked down upon. We were deemed unworthy and low-quality authors because we couldn’t publish anywhere else. However, I wouldn’t let that attitude deter me. I planned to be a respected author—and that was what I intended to do despite attitudes.

In the meantime, I edited the first book I ever wrote, ECHOES IN THE DARK, a Vietnam era novel to go with the three historical fiction novels and one romance that were completed and ready for publication. I sought out a new and emerging industry—Ebooks. All five books were accepted at Awe-Struck Publishing, which later became Mundania Publishing. I WAS PUBLISHED, but Ebooks were not enough. I couldn't meet my readers and talk to them about my work, about the heart and soul I'd put into them, about what I wanted them to convey selling just Ebooks. I found Two Trails Publishing, another small publisher in Independence, Missouri, owned by a woman who became a friend, mentor and driving force in my writing career. Never having taken on a fiction writer before, she took a chance on me and we both grew with our new joint venture. She taught me the publishing end of writing, as well as giving me new directions in which to write. My writing grew stronger and I grew more confident in that writing. I found local events at which to sell my books. I began to speak at historical society meetings, DAR groups and libraries—anywhere they would have me and be interested in what I had to say. I had that interaction I craved with potential readers. They came, they bought—and they wanted more. Returning the next year after purchasing THE WHITE OAKS TRILOGY, numerous of my readers said they “wanted more.” But it was a trilogy! I hadn't planned to write more. I couldn't disappoint my readers, though, so I took secondary characters whose stories I had set up in the original trilogy and gave them their own stories. Readers gobbled them up and wanted more yet. I did a prequel, what I thought would be the final book in the series (at seven). I took a break from the series and wrote ELIZABETH'S WAR: Missouri 1863, a stand-alone novel that takes the reader through General Order Number 11 during one of the most tumultuous times in the history of the Civil War. Set locally where the “real” Elizabeth lived, local readers have made ELIZABETH'S WAR my biggest seller, selling three to five times as many books as my others.

What do I hope to accomplish with my writing? I want to touch people. I want them to read my books and get mad—for the Native Americans who were treated so badly, for the women and children who had to leave their homes and walk 60 miles hoping their family was still alive because of a vacate order during the Civil War. I want girls to know what it felt like to be unable to vote or own property and I want readers to pull out their computers and find out more

about the history that made our nation what it is today. History is both beautiful and ugly. Without one the other does not exist. I want students to get excited about what they've read and want to read more and learn more. I want adults to remember what they learned as children or learn something they didn't know as adults. I want to pique the curiosity of those who know nothing about our history and hope they find out WHY this or that happened and could it have been avoided?

I began with one book. Then wrote another that became a trilogy, which morphed into a ten book series completed this year. In total I've penned twelve novels and garnered many fans in surrounding areas and across the country. At a recent event at least 85% of the books I sold were to, what I call, "return readers," those who have purchased previously and come back for more. Each and every one of them had wonderful things to say about my writing, words that make me want to write more for them to enjoy. If it weren't for my readers, I'd have no reason to write.