

FAQ

YOU WRITE ABOUT THE WEST. DID YOU GROW UP IN THE WEST?

I grew up outside. And most of my stories are about the outdoors.

My childhood, in upstate New York, included an odd assortment of hobbies like target practice, knife throwing, learning to spin a rope, mastering a unicycle and learning to ride a horse (English style, unfortunately). I recall long summers, climbing trees, exploring the woods behind our house and otherwise running wild. Most of July and August I went around barefooted. I brought home every injured animal I found and nursed a few back to health.

WHY DO YOU WRITE ABOUT NATIVE AMERICANS?

My childhood home was once the home of the Mohawk Indians. Yager Museum is located in town I grew up that is filled with wonderful Iroquois masks and artifacts. We were always on the lookout for arrowheads or a stone ax head and my father had quite a collection of napped arrow points made of flint. We learned about the Five Nations in school and often traveled on school trips to see the Indian Museum, which is gone now. But the [Iroquois Indian Museum](#) has been recently erected nearby. James Fennimore Cooper once lived in the town where I was born. He is known for writing the Last of the Mohicans. Finally, the French-Indian Wars took place all around New York. Most people don't think of New York and Native Americans but I assure you that the Iroquois Confederacy/Five Nations were and are still with us.

WHERE DO YOU LIKE TO TRAVEL?

I enjoy traveling to out-of-the-way places. I have twice visited the Brooks Range in Alaska's Interior. During one stay, I was anxious to pick blueberries, but our host asked me to wait until he could come along. I incorrectly assumed he wanted to pick berries as well, until the outing took place and he did not pick, but instead scanned the blueberry patch with a 357-magnum pistol holstered to his hip. Apparently, the bears enjoy picking blueberries, too.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN NOT WRITING?

My hobbies include a wide range of interests like, swimming, hiking and rock hounding. My husband and I are avid gold prospectors and have hunted in North Carolina, Colorado, California and, most recently, Alaska. I have recently moved to Florida, so my activities have changed. I am swimming, walking and biking. I take a kayak out whenever I can and I am looking forward to some short trips around my new home state. Hopefully that will include some scuba diving in the Florida Keys. Oh, yes, and I bought my first fishing pole. Wish me luck on that one!

WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR IDEAS?

I find inspiration in a variety of places. The idea for Winter Woman came from a book on women of the west. The spark that inspired TURNER'S WOMAN came from one sentence in a history book that mentioned American spies in Mexican California and THE TRAPPER occurred to me while viewing a woman's bodkin at the New York Historical Society's Museum. The idea for my first novella, HIS BROTHER'S BRIDE came to me one morning just as I was waking. The idea y first APACHE PROTECTORS series came from reading every news article I could find about the Apache Reservations to give me an idea of the kinds of troubles these tribes are facing. Unfortunately, it is a long list.

WHERE DO YOU WRITE?

I prefer to write in my office, but I can write nearly anywhere. I find myself writing in trains, planes, cars, airports, hotels, libraries and once in a cabin in Alaska with no electricity. I used my Alpha Smart for that one as it runs on two AAA batteries.

ANY TIPS FOR WRITERS?

The best way to learn something is to do it. Joining a writing organization like Romance Writers of America or Mystery Writers of America is a good investment. Another way to learn the craft is to taking a writing class or finding a critique group will all help you improve. Reading the kinds of books you wish to write is a must as well as reading broadly. Don't forget to get out from behind your desk and move around some. Exercise feeds the brain.