

Loving in the Past

Three-time Georgia Author of the Year
Pamela Bauer Mueller
makes Southern history live again

by Gary Fearon

Even before moving to Georgia in 2000, Pamela Bauer Mueller had a deep appreciation for the deep South. While her own versatile travels included growing up in Portland, flying cross-country with Pan Am, teaching and modeling in Mexico City, serving as a U.S. Customs Inspector in San Diego, and performing foreign assignment in Vancouver, her heart was already longing to dive into Southern heritage.

“Years ago I read Harper Lee’s *To Kill A Mockingbird* and was captivated into the Southern world,” said Pamela. “I continue to love Southern writers: Pat Conroy, Charles Martin, Ann Patchett, and many many others. When I read Truman Capote’s *In Cold Blood* I realized that I wanted to write historical novels rather than historical fiction. I wanted to write true stories with real people using the novel form. [Capote] did that perfectly in his story. And naturally the wonderful historians of the Bible have influenced me as well.”

Pamela began what would become an enviable career as a full-time author by writing from her own life; namely, her pet Mexican cat Kiska, the star of a children’s series called The Kiska Trilogy. When Pamela’s daughter raised a guide dog puppy, Aloha became the hero of *I Love You: The Story of Aloha*, which was selected as a 2004 Children’s Choice Book and a 2008 Mom’s Choice award. Its sequel, *Aloha Crossing*, accumulated several other major awards, as have every one of Pamela’s other published works.

When she ventured into her original dream of writing historical fiction, the rich history of the Southland also

provided plenty of material. The starting point for each of these books came from a variety of sources.

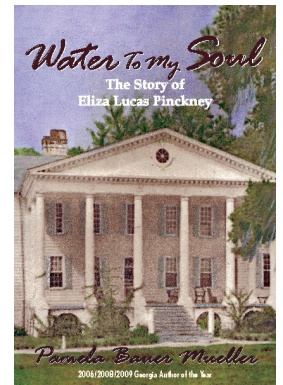
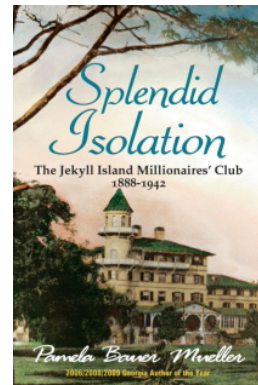
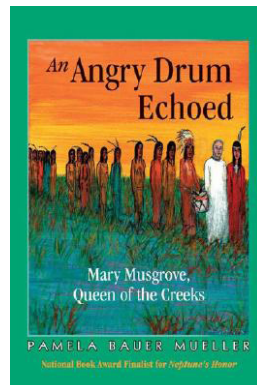
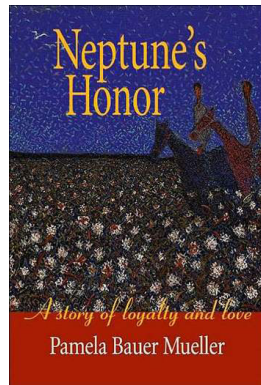
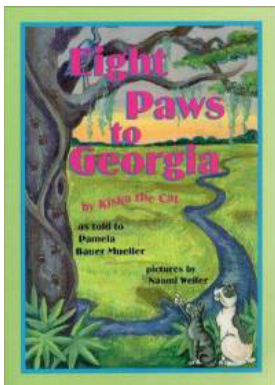
“It seems that someone has planted the seed in my head for each story. I got the idea for *Neptune’s Honor* on the St. Simon Island trolley tour, where the director told us his story. Someone offered me a book to read with a very minor character named Mary Musgrove. She excited me so I followed up on her and wrote *An Angry Drum Echoed*. And a weaver friend told me I simply had to research an amazing colonial woman named Eliza Lucas Pinckney; hence, *Water To My Soul* was born.”

Splendid Isolation, Pamela’s sweeping tale of the millionaires who once ruled Jekyll Island, banked four national awards in 2011. Spanning 54 years of history, it’s one example of the intensive preparation she conducts to assure accuracy in her historic accounts.

“After I’ve researched my subjects, I put everything into a large notebook with sticky notes marking the time periods. Then I sit down and write, going back and forth from the notes to the words on the screen.”

When working on a book, Pamela gets up at 5:45 a.m. and writes for several hours. She then takes a long break for food and exercise, and returns to her computer. She disciplines herself to write six hours a day. The time it takes to complete each book varies.

“My first three were my own story, so they were written from the head and heart and took about six months each, from beginning to publication. The rest all required



research before writing, so the preparation time for each of them was anywhere from a year to a year and a half.”

Pamela is living proof that authors don't have to be traditionally published to be taken seriously. From the beginning, Pamela established a self-publishing strategy that has worked well for all nine of her books.

“After you own your own company, the proper terminology is “independently” published, especially when the press has more than one title. We always wanted to have complete control over our books: cover, pages, marketing, so this was the path we chose.”

While Pamela and her husband oversee all the details of Piñata Publishing (www.kiskalore.com), promoting their releases involves a few extra hands.

“We have a college intern helping us with each book launch. We have a publicist in New York who works with us. We have a distribution company, Partners Publishers Group, who assist us in marketing. With each new title, we go to book conventions, do book tours, speak at historical societies, libraries, etc. The author MUST be very active in



his/her own marketing!”

For Pamela, active marketing includes listening to her audience.

“Readers have always influenced my work. When I wrote the first Kiska story, *The Bumpedy Road*, readers wrote and emailed and begged for a sequel. Then a trilogy. The awards generate even more readers and our emails are often filled with enthusiastic suggestions and comments. Writers adore readers' feedback!”

Many authors do one thing well and stick with it. Pamela's success in her two areas is a pattern she's happy to continue.

“I write in two genres: children's (middle reader) and young adult/adult historical novels. I love them both. As long as I become passionate about new ideas, I will write them.

“I once asked my husband how long we would be writing and publishing? His answer: ‘Until it is no longer fun.’ I'm already thinking about my next book, which will probably be the third and final dog story, making the Aloha books a trilogy as well. Time to entertain the children once again!” ■