

The Declaration of Independents



The 60th Anniversary of the Berlin Airlift

by Mary Simonson

During World War II, the United States and Great Britain were allies of the Soviet Union. It was never a comfortable fit because it was known that Josef Stalin was a murderous dictator. But as Winston Churchill put it, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend," and as long as the Soviets were fighting the Nazis, Stalin was his friend. After the war, Stalin wanted to dismantle German industry and ship it back to the Soviet Union. The Soviets believed that their 20 million dead gave them that right. The Western Allies, however, did not want to repeat the mistakes made at the end of World War I. The conditions of that armistice were so burdensome that they all but guaranteed there would be another war. Great Britain and the United States wanted to ensure that a democracy would rise from the ashes of the Third Reich.

Berlin was divided into four zones, each controlled by one of the Allied powers and Russia. The Soviets planned to take over the three zones not under their control. In mid-June, 1948, the Soviet Union halted all traffic by water and land into or out of the Allied-controlled sectors of Berlin. The only remaining access routes into the city were three 20-mile-wide air corridors across the Russian-controlled zone. With no Allied traffic coming into Berlin to supply its inhabitants with basic necessities, the Soviet Union would be able to starve them into submission.

On June 26, 1948, the Western Powers responded with the start of the Berlin Airlift. On that day, C-47 cargo planes flown by the United States Air Force carried 80 tons of food into Berlin. This was not nearly enough to provide the minimum daily requirements of 1,700 calories to Berlin's population, but the

delivery would soon be supplemented by the U. S. Navy and the Royal Air Force. In short order, the United States responded to the Soviet's blockade by making an open-ended

transports, larger and easier to unload. Snacks were handed out by beautiful frauleins to the pilots who remained in their cockpits, thus saving precious minutes. Eventually, the



C-47s stationed at Tempelhof Airport in Berlin, 1948. Photo courtesy of the United States Air Force, Wright-Patterson AFB, www.wpafb.af.mil.

commitment to the people of Berlin to supply them with calories and coal as long as they were willing to stand up to Soviet bullying.

A complex delivery system would have to be put in place if "Operation Vittles" was to succeed. At the end of July, General William H. Turner of the Military Air Transport Service took over the operation from Brigadier General Joseph Smith. Turner implemented changes which had an immediate impact and greatly increased the tonnage being delivered. Instrument flight rules would be in effect at all times regardless of visibility. In order to avoid accidents, each plane would have only one chance to land; if it missed, it would have to return to its base. In July all C-47s were replaced with C-54

manpower needed to unload the planes was provided by the Germans, who were so efficient that they unloaded a C-54 laden with coal in five minutes and 45 seconds.

American flights were flown out of Tempelhof while the British flew out of Gatow, but with winter approaching this still would not be enough. A third airport was needed in the French sector. French General Jean Ganeval supervised the building of the third airport. When he realized that a Soviet-controlled radio tower was too close to the airport, he asked the Soviets to remove it. When they didn't, Ganeval had it blown up.

Increased flights were possible because the newly developed Ground Controlled Approach Radar allowed all-weather operations. However, on

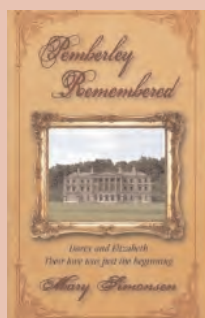
November 28, 1948, a dense fog settled over most of Europe and lasted through December, greatly reducing the number of flights. After a challenging winter, tonnage increased as the weather improved in the spring. The Soviets finally “cried uncle” after 1,383 flights were made on Easter Sunday without a single accident, and on May 11, 1949, the blockade of Berlin was lifted.

When the last transports landed on September 30, 1949, more than two million tons of food and supplies had been delivered by the United States, Britain, and France, assisted by the Air Forces of Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand, and with volunteers from Canada. All told, these countries flew 278,228 flights into the beleaguered city between June 1948 and September 1949. But there was a price. During the 14 months of the blockade, 101 fatalities occurred, 31 of whom were Americans.

This was an incredible achievement for all concerned. But for the British, who were still experiencing rationing and digging up unexploded bombs, and the French, who had suffered more than four years of occupation, it was nothing short of remarkable.

The Berlin Airlift was the beginning of a unique friendship between Germany and the United States. With the implementation of the Marshall Plan in 1947, Germany would rise from the ashes as a democracy. In 1955, the three western sectors of Germany joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and would play an important role in the defense of Western Europe during the three decades of the Cold War. ■

Mary Simonsen is the author of *Pemberley Remembered*. One of the main characters in the story is a USAF navigator during World War II.



A Little Ancient History

by Al Past

Languages have always fascinated me, which is fortunate since in 1977 I wound up with a graduate degree in linguistics. Linguistics is a many-branched limb of anthropology, and among the basic coursework I ended up taking was a two-semester course in historical linguistics, taught by one of the giants of the field, the redoubtable Winfred Lehmann.

Looking back on it later, it's no surprise that I should have been intrigued by a scholarly controversy that raged during the 1970s and 1980s. The matter even caught the interest of the general public through magazine articles, network news coverage, and newspaper features. The basic question can be expressed simply: had America, or the new world, been discovered by Europeans (or others) before Columbus?

At some point in the '70s or thereabouts, it became generally accepted that the Norse had tried to colonize Vinland. Remains were even found. But that's just the tip of the iceberg. There's not enough room here to even begin to list all the theories and evidence for (and against) various

groups believed to have made it to America. A partial list will have to do:

- Were North Africans in Ontario, based on the Tifinagh script?
- Did runestone inscriptions in the Americas indicate the Irish had been there? Saint Brendan, perhaps?
- Were ancient Hebrews in pre-Columbian America?
- What about ancient Chinese anchors (doughnut shaped) dredged up in California?
- Phoenician scripts in West Virginia?
- Pre-Columbian influences detected on Zunis and other Amerindian tribes?
- Was Cherokee script related to hieroglyphics?
- Was maize diffused to India before Columbus?

I collected and poured over books by Barry Fell (*America BC, Bronze Age America, etc.*), Cyrus Gordon (*Forgotten Scripts, Riddles in History, Before Columbus*), Arlington Mallery (*The Rediscovery of Lost America: The Story of the Pre-Columbian Iron Age in*

BOOK REVIEW

Ever Your Servant (Or How Retail Really Sucks)

by K.A. Corlett
www.kacorlett.com

If I may rephrase the back cover blurb: “Imagine Anne Rice being trampled by the cast of *The Office*.” If tired formulaic vampire stories put you to sleep, here comes a wake-up call!

Joelle works for a department store in a Canadian city. She runs one of the ossified business's attempts at being trendy: a health-food section. The bosses are what you'd imagine, obsessed with inane home office protocol and one-upmanship. Joelle's best friends are the slacker geeks who run the electronics section, although she has a work ethic that her friends lack.

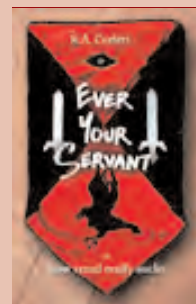
The author has a gift for smart dialogue, and an ear finely tuned toward 9 to 5 dementia. You will be splitting your sides when a tall dark stranger arrives to cast a pall over the scene: Max, who owns the newly installed cyber café. Max is hand-

some, ferociously bright, and polished. He's also unnaturally pale and has some strange habits, like hanging upside down from the ceiling in his darkened office.

Joelle has never before met a man she couldn't manage, but she is seriously off-balance around Max. Fellow employees begin to die, and even though Joelle can guess who is to blame, she can't kick a growing passion for the urbanely mysterious Max as he continues to wreak havoc upon the store and its management.

Ever Your Servant is by turns funny, witty, terrifying, and sexy. What's more, there's a formidable wealth of occult knowledge folded around the office humor and gothic romance. If you're looking for a vampire tale with a genuine—not manufactured—bite, pick this one up.

Review by Juliet Waldron,
author of *Mozart's Wife*
www.mozartswife.com



America), J. G. Landels (*Engineering in the Ancient World*), and Thor Heyerdahl (*The Ra Expeditions, Kon-Tiki*). Even *National Geographic* got into the act, to my delight.

It was all great fun for an amateur who was informed enough to try to hew to the scientific method as far as possible and avoid the obvious crack-pots. From the vantage point of 2008, all I can say for certain is that



Nazca lines in Chile.

there are more accepted links between the ancient world and the new world than ever before. Only weeks ago the *New York Times* reported the work of several linguists showing persuasive links between Eskimo and Indian languages and Siberian languages.

A related controversy also interested me, one that no doubt falls over the line of probability and into the province of kookiness: the possibility that Earth had been visited by extraterrestrials in ages past. Some claimed, for example, that it would have been the only way primitive peoples could have built the pyramids (which is clearly hogwash).

One indisputable puzzle, however, is the presence of Nazca lines in Chile, recently featured in the new Indiana Jones movie. Briefly, these are low piles of rocks pushed into long lines to make shapes, like cartoons. They are huge and can only be seen in their entirety from quite some altitude, perhaps a mile or more. Why would prehistoric Indians go to all that trouble to create something they couldn't see, and why would some of

the figures they created look like creatures wearing space helmets? Credulous souls quickly jumped to the conclusion that the pictures were a sign or signal to creatures who had come from outer space. No one knows for sure, but the lines are still there today for anyone to see.

For me, mulling this kind of thing over year after year, the bottom line is that I started imagining. What if Earth really had been visited by critters from outer space? Might they not have been intrigued by our life forms, especially homo sapiens and all his works? What if they had transplanted a group of these Earth-born life forms to another planet with a similar atmosphere, just to see what could be made of them?

Surely those people, no matter how primitive, would always remember that they had come from somewhere else; oral tradition would insure that. Suppose they eventually developed the technology to seek their original home? Suppose they detected early electromagnetic radiation emanating from Earth, like early radar or radio? Suppose they dispatched a ship to check it out? And suppose that person, although instructed only to observe and not make contact, found it necessary to leave her little base on the moon to bring us an important warning of some kind?

Would we believe her? Of course not! How would she behave toward her? What would she think of her people's original home? And how could she convince us she and her message were for real?

That's how, after twenty years of thinking it over, I decided to write *Distant Cousin*, for which the history and speculation above is implied; the "back story." The book opens as Anney Darshiell lands near the University of Texas McDonnell Observatory in West Texas. The rest, I am sorry to say, is fiction. ■

Al Past is the author of the *Distant Cousin* series--and an excellent photographer to boot. Information on his books (and some darn nice photos) can be found at www.distant-cousin.net.



Graphics For Writers

by Barbara Morgenroth

So here you are perched on the brink of publishing your book and realize you need a cover. If you're on a budget, you have at least two choices: use a generic one from the entity publishing your book or do it yourself. I usually think I can do most everything myself so I chose Door 2.

If you have no background in art, graphics or photography, the learning curve is going to be fairly steep but not impossible. Some of the graphics programs go a long way towards helping a novice. If you have some knowledge, life will be easier.

First off, you need a program that will set dimensions for you or work with a template, not just take the red eye out. This is more sophisticated than a program that will resize images for you so you can attach them to email. You need a program that will easily place text on your images and create the spine of your cover. If it publishes into PDF, that's great. If it saves in PNG (portable network graphics) format, so much the better, as that will retain the quality of your image. JPG will not, as it doesn't hang onto data as well.

You should know the difference between Raster graphics and Vector graphics before you start shopping. Raster graphics are composed of pixels, different colored dots that are joined together to form pictures called bitmaps. Vector graphics are more mathematical, composed of paths drawn between points. They are much more crisp than rasterized images. No matter how big you make a vector image, it will always remain smooth. On the other hand, raster graphics become jagged as they are enlarged. So obviously, vector graphics are better. But they are also a lot more difficult to use.

Having test driven most of these programs, and being opinionated, I'll give a brief comment about each. All are available as trials so download them and see what works for you. Just because it suits me doesn't mean it will suit you, and vice versa. Be prepared to spend time learning how the program works instead of just jumping in and starting. There are online tutorials for several of these and they are helpful. There are also online forums where you can ask questions and get answers.

If you fall in love with an expensive program, look for an older version as they're always less costly. OEM disks, not full retail packages, are always

cheaper to purchase. You can get deals on Ebay but check the feedback to make sure people have been satisfied with the seller.

This is not a complete list of programs by any means, but you'll find these are most common.

Adobe Photoshop—This is the most well-known graphics program and the most expensive. At \$649, I didn't even bother. But if you already have it or can get a free copy or used one, you're set. Best of the lot. www.adobe.com

Adobe Photoshop Elements—I got this to help me do my last nonfiction book. It drove me nuts, but I was working with a very tight deadline. It is not as comprehensive as Adobe Photoshop, but it still has lots of bells and whistles.

Corel Draw Suite—I love Corel. They come up with elegant programs that are usually very user friendly. I wouldn't have a cover today if it weren't for Draw. If the program thinks you're struggling, it sends you a hint—very helpful. I found a good deal but it still cost \$100. Still worth every penny to me. www.corel.com

Corel Paint Shop Pro—I was told by a graphics person this would do everything I needed. At \$40 for a new copy, it seemed like great deal. But you need to understand Vector and Raster graphics before you get to the serious work. It's terrific for retouching photos, making you look like you know what you're doing. Apparently no one uses Draw in the graphics industry, and Paint Shop Pro is in the lower-than-Adobe-Photoshop price range.

Draw Plus—This is one of several graphics/photo programs offered by Free Serif. I downloaded this and it didn't seem comprehensive enough. Then my hard drive crashed so that was the end of that test. They're all about \$10 or free for older versions. Try them and see if they work for you. They would be excellent for making flyers or other promo materials for your books. www.freeserifsoftware.com

GIMP—This is a freeware program but it has a pretty steep learning curve. Unless you're the reincarnation of Sir Edmund Hillary capable of scaling Mount Everest, skip this one. A lite version which might be more user friendly is also available. www.gimp.org

Inkscape—This is a freeware version that aspires to be Adobe Photoshop; a full-featured vector graphics editor. It seems to be very comprehensive and sophisticated. www.inkscape.org

Paint.net—It's free, which is always a good thing. It was created in conjunction with Microsoft to replace the MS Paint that comes with Windows. It uses vector and raster graphics. Check the galleries to see the marvelous work people have done with it. www.getpaint.net

Pixia—I thought this was a cute little program made in Japan, but it was not sophisticated enough to do what I needed. But it's worth looking at and, again, the price is right: free. <http://park18.wakwak.com/~pixia/>

Xara Graphics—This is supposed to be the world's fastest graphics program. It uses Vector graphics. The basic program costs \$89 and seems chock full of interesting graphic effects. www.xara.com ■

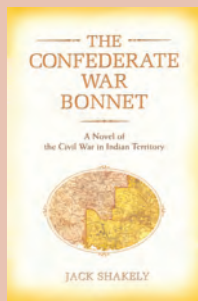
BOOK REVIEW

The Confederate War Bonnet

by Jack Shakely

Jack Gaston, the son of a white mother and a Creek Indian, is as comfortable in the white world of Harvard University and St. Louis as he is in his father's print shop in the Creek Nation. While attending Harvard, Jack learns that he has been elected to his people's House of Warriors. This honor comes in the third year of the War Between the States, when the Northern Creek tribes are fighting for the Union cause and the Southern Creeks, Jack's people, are fighting for the Confederacy.

Jack serves as an officer in the Confederate Army until he is seriously wounded. Returning to the Creek Nation, Jack and his friend Jim Tom Nokose are asked to buoy the spirits of their people by printing a news sheet that contains the usual wartime propaganda. Because there is actually very little good news to report, Jack fills the empty space with the exploits of a Creek/Confederate warrior in a story called "The Confederate War Bonnet," an original tale of fiction Jack has modeled after the dime novels of the era. "The Confederate War Bonnet" is read by both armies, and the imaginary hero becomes so real in the eyes of the Union soldiers that he ends up with a price on his head.



This book explains why so many Indians chose to fight with the Confederates—not because they supported slavery, but because the U.S. government had done too much damage to the Indians over the years to be forgiven. For example, twenty years earlier, Federal soldiers had forcibly removed the Five Civilized Tribes from their homes in the South. Thousands died on the Trail of Tears while walking to their new "home" in Oklahoma. So it is not that the Creeks are fighting *for* the Confederacy but *against* the Federals. As mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

Of course, they would prefer that there be no war at all. As Jack makes his way home, he tells his friend Jim Tom that, "When two elephants fight, regardless of which wins, the grass loses."

Throughout the novel we follow the fictional Jack Gaston while he maintains his dignity fighting for a lost cause, provides for his people who are on the verge of starvation, and writes letters to leaders in Washington asking that the Creeks be recognized as a sovereign nation. Jack Shakely, who is of Creek descent, has no axe to grind, and his portrayal of Jack Gaston shows that. The story is a positive one told with grace and humor, but it also strikes the right chord when the hardships of war descend upon the Creek Nation. This book is an important re-creation of events which occurred in a theater of war that few people know or care about. But they *should* care, because this is where the grass lost.

-Review by Mary Lydon Simonsen, author of *Pemberley Remembered*.

Barbara Morgenroth is the author of *Impossible Charlie* and the upcoming *The Ice Cream Parlor*. Her books can be found at www.dashingbooks.com.



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