

Lost on the Prairie

by MaryLou Driedger

Newsletter-November 2020



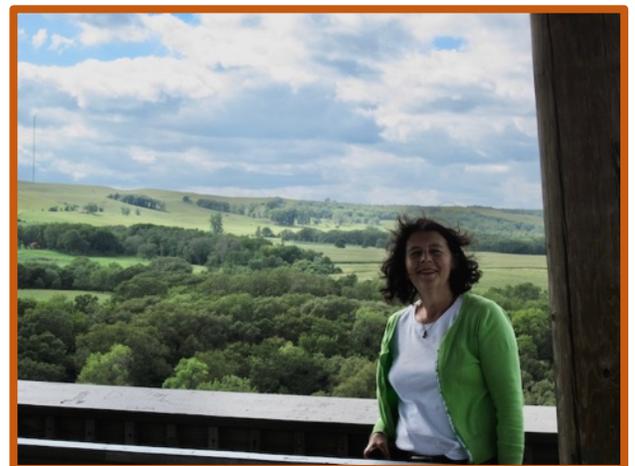
Mark Twain

Is that Mark Twain in the photo with me? Did you know the famous author Mark Twain puts in an appearance in my novel *Lost on the Prairie*? You can learn all about both the photo and how Mark Twain plays a role in my novel by going to this link.

[Mark Twain is A Character in My Novel.](#)

What a Wind!

In the spring of 2016, we made a trip to South Dakota so I could do research for my novel *Lost on the Prairie* which comes out in the spring of 2021. One day we climbed the Nicollet Tower. It is located on a high hill that provides an amazing view of the traditional homeland of the Sisseton -Wahpeton First Nation. Two characters in my novel climb the hill as they set off on an adventure. It was so windy the day we visited that after we'd reached the top of the tower, I thought we might be blown away. To read more about our experience that day you can go to a story I wrote called [Blown Away in South Dakota.](#)





Harriet Zaidman

Harriet Zaidman

After I learned my novel *Lost on the Prairie* would be published someone suggested I meet with Harriet Zaidman. Harriet's successful 2019 novel *City on Strike* is a middle grade historical fiction story just like mine.

It provided a narrative of the Winnipeg General Strike in 1919 from the perspective of a 13-year-old boy. Harriet and I had lunch together in summer and she was so gracious and kind. She shared the story of her publishing journey and provided a wealth of ideas about how to promote my book with schools and community groups.

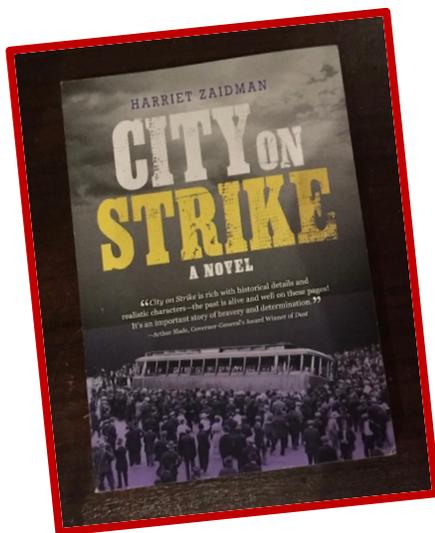
Harriet and I became friends on social media, and I discovered that besides being a writer she was also an excellent cook and maintained a blog called

[North End Nosh.](#)

In early November Harriet invited me to join an online class she was conducting for Winnipeg children's writers. She was going to teach the group how to make three kinds of bread.

I had never baked bread before and was excited to learn. To read about how things turned out and meet the children's writers who were part of the bread baking group follow the link below.

[Authors Who Bake.](#)



Getting To Know Grandpa

Writing and researching *Lost on the Prairie* has helped me learn more about my grandfather Peter Schmidt who died when I was only seven years old. My novel is based on an incident in Grandpa's childhood.

My research has put me in contact with quite a number of my grandfather's relatives who I had never connected with before and I am learning interesting new things about Grandpa from them.

In November for example I discovered that my grandfather had been a gifted auctioneer. You can read about it in this piece titled

[My Grandpa Was An Auctioneer.](#)



Peter and Annie Schmidt my grandparents



Margaretha Schellenberg Sawatzky my great grandmother (1873-1943) with her husband Franz Sawatzky (1869-1936)

My Great-Grandmother's Grave

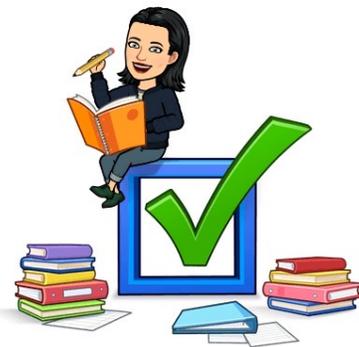
Many years ago, my Dad told me a story about digging his grandmother's grave on a very cold February Day in 1943. The process he described of using hot coals to warm the earth was fascinating. My Dad's childhood memory inspired a scene in my novel *Lost on the Prairie* where a grave is being prepared for one of my characters.

To garner more information to make the scene in my book authentic I interviewed three of my aunts about my great grandmother's funeral and they helped me flesh out the story of her death.

[Family Tragedy- Thawing the Ground For Burial](#)

A New Granddaughter

A big event in November for my husband Dave and me, was welcoming a new granddaughter Nora Dot to the world. She is our fourth grandchild. One of the reasons I wanted to write *Lost on the Prairie* was to give my grandchildren a greater understanding of their family history.



I want to thank several newsletter readers who pointed out that the links in both my September and October newsletters didn't work. It took a fair bit of experimenting, but I've figured out a solution. Please do let me know if you have any trouble reading this newsletter or using the links. If you'd like to read the September and October newsletters with the working links let me know and I'll resend you copies.

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Thanks so much for your interest in my book.

MaryLou