

RuralAmerica: A Pictorial Folk Memory

Author Bio – Mary A. Shafer

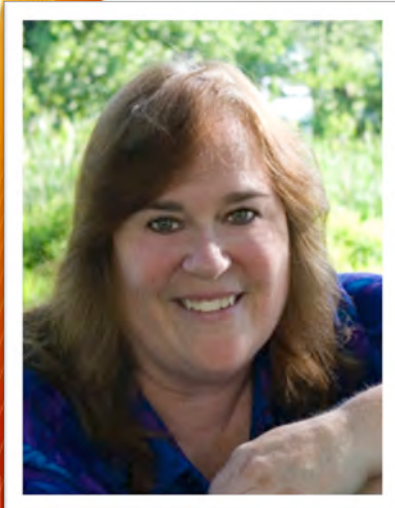
Mary Shafer is a full time freelance writer and marketing consultant. From June to December, she lives and works in upper Bucks County, in her home state of Pennsylvania. The rest of the year, she enjoys following the warmer weather in her travel trailer, accompanied by her blind cat, Idgie. She is the author of four nonfiction books, and contributor to two published nonfiction anthologies.

Rural America was her second book, published in 1995 by Willow Creek Press in Minocqua, Wisconsin. She had previously served for a short time as Willow Creek's art director, when it had been an imprint of NorthWord Press in the early 1990s.

Willow Creek's publisher, Tom Petrie, had taken notice of Mary's writing then, and was impressed with her debut book, *Wisconsin: The Way We Were*. When he wanted to publish a book on the history of America's agricultural heartland, he knew Mary was an author who would provide factual accuracy, while imbuing her manuscript with just the right flavor of warm nostalgia.

He provided Mary with a hundred historic photos from the Library of Congress, and requested that she weave them into a narrative about agrarian life in our country, when the majority of Americans lived and worked on farms or in support of agriculture, before the Industrial Revolution.

She felt it was a creative writer's dream project, as well as an opportunity to celebrate the first 15 summers of her youth, growing up on her grandparents' farm in rural south-central Pennsylvania, in the Allegheny foothills. It was well-received, garnering that year's award for Best Hardcover Book in One or Two Colors from the MidAmerica Book Publishers Association.



Mary believes that now, more than ever, we need to be reminded of our connection to nature, to the land, and to each other...something she believes Rural America achieves, while looking fondly back at a simpler time. That's why she is reviving the original book, in softcover format.

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