

The Authors Corner

by Dutch Rhudy

Welcome to the second edition of The Authors Corner.

Last month I presented a recap of Roaring Falls and its currently modified overarching outline. This month I wish to describe the setting and how it unfolded. But first, a reader and benefactor of my first rough drafts, for a critique of the mystery series, sent an e-mail. He requested that I say more about how I kept moving backwards in time.

For my readers who may not be familiar with how a mystery is developed. Here is my response to his suggestion. A mystery story is often written backwards, and the outline scenario for the Roaring Falls series may go something like this.

We have a victim, a bullet is lodged in his chest.

The logical questions are: What type of weapon did the bullet come from? Who shot the bullet? From what location did they shoot? Why did they shoot the victim?

A detective is called to the scene.

Who does the detective work for? If not the police, then what agency is he from? When was he hired by this agency? When did this agency become the authority to call for difficult cases?

Delving a little further into the history of this agency.

When was this detective agency founded? Who is the founder? Why was it opened in this location?

In the case of Roaring Falls, I continued to step back in time.

When was the city founded? How long was it a town before becoming a city? Who incorporated the town?

Which brings us to the early peoples of the town.

Where did these people come from? How did they get here? Why did they come here? Who was the first person to arrive here? Why did they choose this place to come to?

These were the basic steps that brought my story of Roaring Falls to a starting point. After the questions posed above were answered, I began the world building process within the time line of the new chosen location for the story.

Returning to the Roaring Falls setting and how it unfolded. The complete scene did not come all at once for me as it does for some authors. I began with descriptions of the various areas in the city where the crimes took place. Each of these individual scenes were fitted together on a fictional city map, until most of the city boundaries were defined.

The modern city was almost fully developed when I began writing. However, after I changed the location, which caused a shift in the time period, it needed several alterations. Next I needed a county to set the city in, and naturally the county needed a state.

I chose to keep the state fictional, but placed inside the continental United States. I spent several months studying US History to learn if doing this was even a possibility. Where ever I

placed this new state, it must fit with existing US History and events. Not an easy task to accomplish in a believable way.

I lucked out and found the perfect place to set my fictional state down, and in such a way, existing US History provided the way and means to do so. At least momentarily without creating an alternative history record in later years.

With the perfect location for the fictional state of New Clemons established, the natural lay of the land provided for the landscape elements I needed for my story. Points of reference to cities outside the fictional state, gave credence to the story and location. A little author's prerogative and the attitude of the citizens of the state, allowed them to keep their state, even after it was assimilated by the currently existing states of today.

A broad example taken from history. Those southern members of our country still consider the confederate states as an entity, even though it ceased to exist. Many still fly the confederate flag, and claim the south will rise again. Everyone else are just dang Yankee's.

The proud peoples of the state of New Clemons retain such an attitude about their state. The original county seats are maintained apart from the legal entities now controlling them. Although no longer an independent state, they classify their old boundaries similar to a private or church organizations boundaries.

Just as the south will never die, the state of New Clemons will forever be recognized by the peoples who live there. All counties, including Yarnell County, and the city of Roaring Falls, maintain their own maps and jurisdictions.

Handling the story in this manner provides an interesting permanent setting for the entire Roaring Falls series. All novels written by and for the Roaring Falls series, from 1800 to 2000 and beyond, will have a common functional base to work from, regardless of the time frame chosen.

Between the four peaks of the Regal Quartet atop the Trident Tines Plateau, south of Bluff Mountain, three rivers drop as Roaring Falls into Emerald Glass Lake. The Franklin River carries these waters to the Coteaux River which forms the eastern and northern borders of New Clemons.

Old Indian hunting paths grew to trails, and later the first major roads through the city of Roaring Falls. From the Landing on the riverfront, travelers first rode the Kirkland Stage to the County Seat, then buses and cars. A train served Roaring Falls, but was replaced with two airports and major trucking terminals. A new superhighway replaced the train tracks.

It takes several maps to show how the area changed from generation to generation, as new homes and stores replaced older landmarks. A few of the original homes became historical landmarks in the modern city of Roaring Falls.

Respectfully submitted
Dutch Rhudy