

Amy Ammons Garza,

Author and Storyteller



BACKGROUND

Amy grew up in Western North Carolina listening to the stories her grandfather told her. As the eldest of her generation, he impressed upon her to “pass on” the stories of their heritage to the next generation.

Amy began writing at age 39 in 1981, studying with Professor Charles Tinkham, completing 8 years of creative writing at Purdue University Calumet, in Hammond, Indiana. Winner of over 30 awards for short stories, personal essays, children's literature, poetry and novels, including four first place awards for "Novel-in-Progress" through Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana, she became a columnist/associate editor for 14 years at Transport Fleet News, a trucking magazine in Chicago, IL (Circulation 11,000). While attending Purdue, Amy became editor of Skylark, the fine arts publication for Purdue University Calumet. Her articles has appeared in EQ Magazine, Skylark, Arts Indiana, Right Here, The Hometown Magazine, Now and Then, Healing Network, Appalachian Heritage, The Alumni Courier, The Good Old Days, and Potato Eyes.

AUTHOR

Retter, A Novel of the Mountains (Winston-Derek, 1988) based on her grandmother's life, 3rd printing.

Cannie, the Hills of Home (Mountain Lights Publishing, 1991) story of her mother, 2nd printing.

Matchbox Mountain (Bright Mountain Books, 1994) short stories based on growing up in WNC

Catch the Spirit of Creativity (Bright Mountain Books, 1994) creative writing and art workbook.

I Am Somebody, (Ammons Communications, LTD, 1996) true story of a young Appalachian man, Tony Queen, with 15 interviews of those who knew him before and after his tragic death at the hands of seven "friends."

Sterlen, and a Mosaic of Mountain Women, (Catch the Spirit of Appalachia, 2005) third book in the trilogy of her family.

"Blue Ridge Mountain Stories." Storytelling CD containing stories drawn from her novels.

EDITOR/COLUMNIST/PUBLISHER

1993-Current—Editor and columnist for Fun Things to do in the Mountains, a publication serving Western North Carolina (circulation 30,000) (www.funthingstodointhemountain.net). She is Editor/Publisher for Ammons Communications (Imprint: Catch the Spirit of Appalachia) in Sylva, North Carolina, which has published to date 23 books written by local WNC authors. (www.catchthespiritofappalachia.org)

PLAYWRIGHT

Amy has written and produced four major community plays:

"The Spirit of Appalachia," 1999—Appalachian Cultural Center in Dillard, Georgia, 25 shows

"Strong Comes After," 2000—UNC in Asheville for the Western North Carolina Women's 2000 Convention.

"The Trail of Light," 1999-2004-(Lineage of Christ) Christmastime on the campus of WCU in Cullowhee, NC.

"Mary, Did You Know," 2005-current. Christmastime on the campus of WCU in Cullowhee, NC.

STORYTELLER/VISITING ARTIST/CO-FOUNDER— "THE AMMONS SISTERS"

Amy has partnered with her sister Doreyl Ammons Cain for twenty-three years as a visiting artist, lecturer, storyteller. **In Performance**—as Amy tells the story of growing up in WNC, Doreyl spontaneously illustrates the story. **In Residencies**—Amy teaches creative writing and drama; Doreyl teaches visual art and opening doors to creativity. The two have worked in Indiana, Illinois, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia and North Carolina.

In Community—In 1989, Amy and Doreyl cofounded Catch the Spirit of Appalachia, Inc., a not-for-profit organization dedicated to honoring the heritage and creativity of all people.