

Books/Libraries

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I try to make a point, blogwise, of not getting into conversations, answering questions like "How did you get the idea for...?" etc. but someone has asked the name of the Welsh mystery I mentioned. And what the heck: it is always a good thing to support another author, though I suspect this one has no need of my publicity. The author's name is RHYS BOWEN (my grandson is named Rhys because his parents travelled in Wales and loved the name, a common one there) and the mystery series is the Constable Evans series. The titles all seem to make puns on the name Evans..such as "Evans to Betsy"...I forget which one I read lately and it has gone back to the library already so I can't check.

I love libraries. No surprise. But the little public library of my childhood was such an important part of my life that I long remembered it as magnificent and huge, with a hundred marble steps leading to it as if it were a cathedral. When I returned to that small town (Carlisle, Pennsylvania) to speak at the library's 100th birthday a few years ago, I discovered that it was a small building with maybe ten cement steps.

But it had always felt important and grand to me then. It was a hushed, dim, and quiet place, not the airy space alive with projects and laughter that libraries are today. It felt like a place of worship to me, and I went there with my hands freshly washed and my best manners on display. I think I would have liked the style of contemporary libraries, and I would laugh and talk along with the other children, were I a child today; but still, I am very nostalgic about the old-fashionedness of it then, in the 40s, and the solemnity I felt every time I pulled open the heavy front door.



I just...while writing this...looked for a website and there it was, the Bosler Library, and I see that this summer there is a kids' reading program and the theme is books and animals. I want to be eight again!! Those were my two favorite things when I was eight!!!! I would have been reading "My Friend Flicka" that year, and "The Yearling" - we owned both books in my home, so my copies would not have been library books...but I would have been haunting that library for other

books like them, books that would draw me into the life of a child with a horse, or a fawn, or some other four-footed pet to love. My own airedale puppy had bitten my baby brother and had to be given away; I wept with Jody in *The Yearling* for the tragedy of his lost fawn, because I had known such loss myself.

I found a photo too, on that website, and so here it is: my childhood church. The place that taught me how to move into a fictional world and feel it come to life.

Tags: Untagged