

Joyce's Journal

A monthly dispatch from Joyce A. Miller, Writer



LADY COLUMBIA AND LONG WAITS!

An excerpt from **Mrs. Gari Melchers** celebrating the Fourth of July in New York City in 1915:

"Dressed in white with a red, white, and blue sash, Corinne sauntered down the avenue. Gari was dashing in a linen suit with a straw hat. Both she and Gari walked with their umbrellas aloft in a throng of umbrellas. They stopped at a street-side stand for a hot dog and a lemonade.

Before they left Times Square, they paused between bites of hot dog to listen to a speech about America's president keeping the United States out of the war in Europe. The sea of people then sang "Dixie," and "Yankee Doodle." A car decorated with red, white, and blue electric lights drove up to the bandstand where the speaker stood. A man and woman, dressed as Uncle Sam and Columbia, jumped from the car, and danced. The crowd roared with applause."

Before Lady Liberty, there was Lady Columbia-- a mythical, adult, female personification of the United States. She symbolized liberty and American ideals. One can't help but wonder what Lady Columbia would make of the United States' current moment in history. "Hail, Columbia" was used as a defacto national anthem before "The Star Spangled Banner" was named as the official one in 1931.

I wish I had better news for you about the release of **Mrs. Gari Melchers**. I'm going to receive my printer's proof copy within the next few weeks. The publisher will then submit a review copy to all

A GLIMPSE OF
WHAT'S INCLUDED:

**Some endorsements
for Mrs. Gari
Melchers**

the major reviewers, including the **New York Times** and the **Washington Post**. These reviewers require a 4-to-6-month lead time, which means that I won't have an official release date until January 2026! The publisher has offered to forego these reviews and then I could have the book in August of this year, but in my opinion, that defeats the purpose of having the publisher. If I wanted to publish the book with no fanfare or reviews, I could self-publish like I did with my first two books. I'm feeling a bit deflated and disenchanted with the whole situation.

What I'm reading right now is **Yellowface** by Rebecca F. Kuang. In the novel, June Hayward is a struggling writer and her former creative writing classmate, Athena Liu, is now a literary darling with three bestsellers. When Athena dies unexpectedly, June uses the chance to take Athena's new manuscript about the Chinese Labor Corps of World War I and passes it off as her own. What ensues after the book becomes a bestseller is utter chaos.

As the bonus for July's newsletter, I'm attaching the endorsements I received for **Mrs. Gari Melchers**. Maybe they will sway you to read and enjoy the book when it finally comes out? In January of next year?

I live in the Church Hill section of Richmond, VA with my husband and my retired racing greyhound. Before I started writing, I worked for 30 years at a nuclear physics research laboratory.

Do what you came here for!



JOYCE A. MILLER, WRITER

www.joyceamiller.com

@JOYCEAMILLERWRITER on Instagram

Praise for *Mrs. Gari Melchers*

“*Mrs. Gari Melchers* follows Corinne Melchers’ steadfast journey for recognition in a society that expects women to stay in the background. From art school critiques to the unforgiving Paris Salon, and a life with renowned painter Gari Melchers in Holland, Corinne must reconcile her identity as an artist, a wife, and a woman fighting to be seen. She builds a creative life alongside, and sometimes despite, a husband who loves her dearly but struggles to understand her yearnings, despite being an artist himself. Joyce Miller’s beautifully crafted historical novel is a nuanced, heartfelt exploration of ambition, marriage, and the quest for artistic freedom in an era in which women’s voices often were not heard. Miller offers a moving portrait of resilience, quiet defiance, and creative hunger.”

—Gigi Howard, host of the podcast *Drinks in the Library*

“For lovers of art and Virginian history, Joyce Miller’s *Mrs. Gari Melchers* offers a glimpse into a world gone by. Grounded in period and technical detail, the opening scenes transport the reader into the early twentieth century life of Corinne Mackall, an artist who struggles to find her place amid shifting feminist expectations, the fetters of Depression-era societal norms, and turmoil of two world wars. In Corinne, Miller has unearthed a figure often relegated to the footnotes of art history... but who is clearly worth getting to know in her own right.”

—Joanna Lee, Poet Laureate of Richmond, Virginia,
and author of *Dissections*