

Lora-Marie Bernard

Texas author & storyteller Lora-Marie Bernard writes nonfiction books about interesting Texans and stories that explore the historic relationship between Texas and the global economy.

Her family settled in Burleson, Texas near Fort Worth when she was in kindergarten. Her mother was a German immigrant and her father was a first-generation Italian American. They raised her and her brother with small town Texas values and an international mindset. This philosophy deeply influences her approach to her books and storytelling.

Her father told her Texas was going to be one of the most prosperous states in the nation for the rest of her life. She believed him.

Educated in the "Texas state of mind" she never questioned that she'd spend her life telling the stories about the state and the people who make its past, present, and future.

After graduating with a journalism degree from the Mayborn School of Journalism at the University of North Texas, she worked at the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* as a metro beat reporter, an internet editor and a Friday night desk editor for the sports department.

From Fort Worth, she moved to Houston/Galveston and lived on the island for several years. She worked for local news outlets and spent several years as a public affairs correspondent and columnist for the neighborhood sections of *The Houston Chronicle*. It was on the Texas coastal prairies that she became an award-winning journalist and storyteller.

Her first book was *Lower Brazos River Canals*, which was part of the Arcadia Images of America Series. It depicts the history of the lower river and the impact it had on the Texas economy as well as the state's water management system.

Her second book was *Counterfeit Prince of Old Texas, Swindling Slaver Monroe Edwards* and it solidified her position as an author under the Arcadia/History Press imprint. It chronicles the biography of a forgotten Texas slave smuggler and the international crime spree he began after swindling his partner out of a slave plantation.

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The character's winding story reveals the complexities of Texas's pre-Revolutionary communities and the race to build a plantation economy to benefit Britain and the United States.

Her third book *Houston Center, Vision to Excellence* was a coffee tabletop book that unravels the battle early oil giants waged to develop and control Houston downtown. The book, which she was commissioned to write for Green Oak Publishing, was presented as a holiday gift to every downtown tenant of the Houston Center, which includes the high-rises, the George R. Brown Convention Center and shops around Discovery Green.

Her fourth and current book *The Yellow Rose of Texas, The Song, The Legend & Emily D. West*, breaks new ground in understanding how Texas and the world created a legend so embedded in Lone Star culture that the two can no longer be separated. She recounts the context of Emily D. West's life as a free person of color and views it with a modern lens. Then she traces the steps that turn history's account of Emily from a woman connected to leading Northern abolitionists to a femme fatale connected to Sam Houston's efforts to win Texas Independence. Finally, she documents how the woman and song met. In her account of the legend, Bernard gives dignity to Emily West and new meaning to the Yellow Rose of Texas.

Bernard's accolades include numerous Associated Press awards and national press honors for her public affairs and investigative reporting. Early in her career, she earned a Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award.

Today, she operates a media/outreach consulting firm that helps governments and others navigate cutting-edge digital technologies and governance issues. She also operates a boutique publishing house for creative projects, such as documentaries, corporate histories and specialty books.

Her recent national correspondent projects include the Trump presidential campaign, election and inauguration. She was also an international radio commentator, journalist and photographer for the latest Texas U.S. Senate Race, the Washington D.C. Women's March, and Hurricane Harvey.

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She earned her master's degree in liberal arts extension studies from Harvard University in 2018. She is the Vice President of the Southeast Texas Museum Association and a board member for Keep Houston Beautiful where she represents At-Large District 3 Houston Councilmember Michael Kubosh.

She also serves as a Corporate Board member for the Alumnae-i Network for Harvard Women and the communications chair for a Harvard Kennedy School state and local policy group.

She lives in NASA/Clear Lake where she has a happy rescue dog named Heidi. Her longtime companion is Bobby Gervais, a Baylor law graduate who serves as a municipal attorney.