



## **An Interview with the Author of *Out of the Apple Orchard***

**On October 19, 2005, Bob Kealing, a three-time Emmy award-winning journalist interviewed Yvonne David, author of *Out of the Apple Orchard* (Arbiter Press, 2005). Bob Kealing, a reporter for WESH-TV, Orlando, is the author of *Kerouac in Florida, Where the Road Ends* (Arbiter Press, 2004.)**

Q. How did you get interested in writing about this subject?

A. Initially my son's Bar Mitzvah teacher suggested that I write a young people's book about the Jewish High Holidays. I wanted to write an American story and not one set in the Old Country. An image of a twelve-year-old boy taking apples from an orchard came to me one night. He wore knickerbockers and boots and a cap, two sizes too big, which drooped down to his eyebrows. Having completed the manuscript, I felt that adding a sense of place to my story would create a richer layer to the book. Eventually, my research led me to the Catskills in upstate New York.

Q. It seems as if the Catskills are intrinsic to the story line; how do they help make this a uniquely American story?

A. I became fascinated with the history of the Jewish settlers in the Catskills, and how many of the grand resorts and country clubs of the golden era in the Catskills had developed from such humble beginnings as the Jewish farms. Set in 1910, the book evolved into a Jewish American work of historical fiction for young people, while also addressing the importance of spiritual renewal, golden opportunities, and valuable education in America.

Q. On that note, how does the book and storyline celebrate Jewish American heritage?

A. By stressing the Jewish lessons learned, set within the immigrant experience and in particular the early Jewish settlers in the Catskills, my book celebrates our Jewish American heritage. However, this story can be extended to all immigrants. While striving to retain the values of their heritage, they can still enjoy the opportunities and freedoms of America. Through my historical fiction, and because I am a British immigrant, I feel that I can write objectively about the Catskill Mountains.

## **An Interview with the Author of *Out of the Apple Orchard Continued***

Q. What's been the reaction of the people in the places portrayed in your book?

A. I have had enthusiastic encouragement and overwhelming positive reaction to the book in the Catskills. Set in Mountaindale, a hamlet within the township of South Fallsburg, my fictional children's story shows history coming alive. Many people living in the Catskills, or interested in its history, have supported me in my writing this work. Phil Brown, Professor, Brown University, and author of *Catskill Culture* and *In the Catskills*, John Conway, author of *An Anecdotal History of Sullivan County* and Sullivan County Historian, and Helen Kutsher, owner of Kutsher's Country Club, have all helped to add the wealth of historical details in the work. Ken and Barbara Schmitt, involved in the revitalization of Mountaindale, have featured my book on the Mountaindale Community Development Project website. Phil Brown, President and Co-Founder, of the Catskills Institute invited me to be a speaker at the Annual Conference at Kutsher's Country Club in Monticello, New York in August of this year. Other organizations, such as book stores, book fairs, libraries, schools, and senior groups, have invited me for speaking presentations and book signings.

Q. What's the main message you want children to take away from the story?

A. Taking something that does not belong to them is wrong. However, they can learn from their mistakes. When life presents them with difficult challenges, they can seek direction by turning to the wisdom of their heritage. Children can ask for forgiveness, make up for any misdeeds and have a fresh, new start.

Q. This is the beginning of a series, where do we go from here?

A. The second book in the series will take place in the late 1930s – in the winter, with flashbacks to the summer. The books in the Apple Tree Series will follow the Bieman family over four generations through the twentieth century. By reading my book series, treasured moments of summer spent in the Catskills by an entire generation of yesteryear can now be enjoyed by the younger generation of today.