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## DISCOVERY OF CIVIL WAR LETTERS LEADS TO NOVEL Local Physician Bases New Book on Lives of Great Grandparents

Rumford, ME (March 20, 2003)—Physician Jane Smith was looking for an old dress when she found a packet of her great-grandparents' letters, along with an inspiration. Dated between 1864-70, the correspondence tells a dramatic and compelling story of love, war, and politics. Smith used the real letters to create the tale of a fictional relationship between a woman from Roxboro, North Carolina and a man from Rumford, Maine set against the dramatic backdrop of the Civil War.

From Roxboro to Rumford , a novel published today through the online content marketplace Lulu.com, tells the story of Ashley Rhett and Sam Bowdoin, young lovers who meet in Washington, DC just before the outbreak of the Civil War. Before they can get to know one another, Ashley returns to the south while Sam joins the Union forces. Writing letters of increasing intimacy and passion through the years of the war and its bitter conclusion, the two lovers eventually marry over the objections of both of their families.

Smith, a practicing pediatrician, found the letters while rummaging in her attic looking for an old dress. "I read them beginning to end," says Smith, "right there kneeling on my attic floor." She was, she explains, captivated by a time and place she had never even tried to imagine. Smith decided to use the letters as the basis for a novel. "The story just poured out of me. I couldn't stop writing," she explains.

"This is one of the best-crafted love stories set in the Civil War that I have ever read," said Atticus Bullfinch, Professor of Creative Writing at Rumford Community College. "Smith paints a vivid portrait of the time and tells a gripping story."

Though she never had any intention of writing a historical novel, Smith says that after writing *From Roxboro to Rumford*, she's hooked. She plans to follow up with another novel set during the same period.

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Jane Smith is a first-time novelist who lives in Rumford, Maine, with her husband, three kids and two dogs. She is available for comment at 207-555-1212 or [jane\\_smith@yahoo.com](mailto:jane_smith@yahoo.com).

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