

Written for Great Books for God's Girls (blog)

November 2020

399 words

What I Love About History

History has always fascinated me—not the names, places, and dates, but the stories. True stories, with real-life heroes and villains. The Revolutionary War was (and still is) my favorite era. There was no question as to whose side I was on, as there sometimes was with the Civil War. The Revolution was at a safer distance than the World Wars, which were just recent enough to worry me (although I'm now interested in some aspects of WWII—my struggles with fear greatly lessened when I came to the Lord). And the Revolution certainly had a lot of heroes to choose from! When I decided to write a historical novel, the era of America's birth was an obvious choice.

But I didn't want to write about the stories everyone else wrote about: the Boston Tea Party, Bunker Hill, Valley Forge. So I did my research and picked North Carolina, where British and American soldiers waged a vital conflict that rarely makes headlines. And in North Carolina, I discovered the Regulator Uprising.

The less known a historical tale is, the better I like it. I think that's what first interested me about these everyday people standing against corrupt government. The same principle applied when I was introduced to the history of Baptists in early America. This was classic good-versus-evil stuff that most people didn't even know about! When I learned about the Baptist influence in the Regulator Uprising, well, that was a story waiting to happen.

Yet as I read and wrote and reread and rewrote, I found that the story isn't just about the Baptists after all. It's about believers following God as best they knew how, whether they believed just like I do or not, and how their beliefs affected what happened to them. It's about the way freedom of spirit inevitably leads to freedom of thought, which inevitably leads to conflict with tyranny. It's about true liberty of conscience, whether an Anglican extends it to a Baptist or a Baptist extends it to an Anglican. That is the true story of all history—where there is freedom, there is growth. When we offer freedom to others, we allow God to do His own work in His own way. And that is what truly fascinates me about history: God at work in all His children, redeemed to Him out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.