



author spotlight

About The Book:



This devotional book contains 365 true stories of struggles, courage, and actions of women, children, and men involved in the home front of American wars, in chronological order, from the French Indian War through the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. These stories illustrate effective prayers, heroism, volunteer efforts, and daily courage. Special weekend devotions consist of original words from a journal, newspaper, letter, or newspaper, and glimpses into life during that era, such as fashion, pastimes, work, and celebrations. Each story includes a coordinated Scripture and a prayer for today's military, families, or individuals encountering struggles.

The book represents hundreds of years of history that up until now has gone largely unnoticed and uncelebrated. While generations have gone to war, those who stayed behind were the backbones holding them up. Stories of Faith and Courage from the Home Front captures the fascinating and inspiring history of the heroes at home, from the very foundation of our nation up until the present day.

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www.mtlmagazine.com

How did you get started in your writing career?

For years people told me I should share the activities I did with my children and how I connected them with faith. Once my oldest began college and my youngest began preschool I went on a retreat where God revealed he wanted me to write. Within a few weeks I met a writer who became my mentor and walking partner. Soon after I attended a Christian writers' conference and I started selling articles, puppet scripts, and children's activities.

What was the first book you wrote?

A curriculum book titled *The Beatitudes*.

Why did you choose to write nonfiction?

I tend to have lots of ideas to share and that fits well in nonfiction. I prayed and God directed me to writing for families.

What was the most difficult aspect of writing your book and how did you overcome it?

Digging through history for the right stories and finding the faith connections for each story. I traveled to historic societies and libraries and read many digitalized journals and historic documents in my quest. Many times I prayed for the perfect story and God led me to the right source.

How—if at all—did your book evolve and change as you wrote it?

Changes take place as I create the proposal and outline. As I thought of sharing the home front I realized I wanted to give readers a glimpse of the lifestyle of each period. That led to the idea of once a week including a glimpse into something of that period (fashions, entertainment, work, etc). It helped keep the focus on life on the home front.

What do you enjoy most about writing?

The creativity. I love to come up with ideas and solve problems. My inspirational craft books, (new one is *My Mini Dream Room*) let me create dollhouse furniture and tie that with scriptures on little things in the Bible that are really significant.

What passion drove you as you wrote your new book?

I've always been passionate about military families. I found great joy and excitement at discovering stories that showed the importance of faith and strength when people faced great challenges. Life is not always easy. I've had two homes struck with lightning and hit by major hurricanes (one destroyed half the house and we were in it during the storm). But true stories of courage have helped me face changes and I hope in sharing such stories they will help others.

From where do you get your topic or story ideas?

For the Home Front book my editor suggested I write something in their God and Country division. I am not about wars, so I said a fast prayer, and they said, "You know I'm all about the family, so if I wrote for that division I would want to do stories of faith and courage from the home front. I would want to show how women, children, and others struggled and overcame obstacles as they supported the men, and now women, who serve. He liked the idea and a few months later I had a contract to write the book. I found a co-author because he wanted it written fairly fast.

What surprised or otherwise impacted you as you wrote your book?

The underlying themes that jumped out surprised me. For instance, I hadn't realized how women advanced in the work force or how much the Bible was translated and spread because civilians had such great desire to share Christ with soldiers on both sides.

What do you hope readers will gain from your book(s)?

An understanding of the courage and strength of women and military families, and how the power of prayer that has no boundaries or distance limitations.

For whom did you write this book?

For Americans, to help them understand our past. I also wrote it for military wives and children to let them see that their struggles have been shared through time by others who faced them with faith and dignity.

How do you balance career and family?

When I started and my five children were age 4 to college age I only wrote when everyone was in school or happily occupied. My writing time increased as my youngest grew up. Now, with a husband battling breast cancer I juggle caring for him and writing.

What is or has been one of the greatest challenges in your writing career?

Writing in hospitals as my husband had chemo for breast cancer.

What projects are you working on now?

I just finished a preschool devotional for girls (Tyndale) with a princess theme and a going green book for girls (Zonderkidz). I hope to do something for kids on history.

What is your favorite book besides the Bible?

Pride and Prejudice. I love the banter of the dialogue and it still makes me laugh.

What book(s) do you have on your nightstand right now?

The Archeological Bible.

As a child, what fictional character did you most admire?

Nancy Drew because she solved puzzles to solve mysteries. As a mathematician I love solving puzzles.

What life experience, education, or training helped you become an author?

My degree is mathematics and that gave me a very logical mind that helps me organize my writing and time. My grandmothers spent time teaching me all sorts of crafts and needlework and that inspired me to think creatively. Being a mom and coming from a happy, functional family helped me love family and want to share fun and great stories with families.

What do you do when you're not writing?

Spend time with family and friends, knit, and garden. But, sometimes I have travel adventures. I have swum in the Black Sea in Russia, enjoyed white water rafting in the Nymboida River and horseback riding in the Australian outback, rode a camel in the Canary Islands, enjoyed scuba diving off Bermuda's coast, took a day long bicycle trip along Singapore's coast, camped in Canada, and rode horses in the ocean in Jamaica.

What is your go-to food, snack, or special treat?

Chocolate and hot chocolate with lots of whipped cream

What is your life verse?

Ephesians 3:16 is a verse that God kept bringing to mind years ago. It reminds me God will strengthen me with power through the Holy Spirit and God has amazing creative power. I find when I pray he draws out creativity in me.

What is God teaching you right now?

Trust my husband's health (cancer) to him

Please share one of your favorite memories of shopping in a local Christian bookstore.

When my children were young I loved going to Amazing Grace in Old Saybrook. They had a great children's section where my children could play and find books. The owner kept my daughter's favorite series in stock and always had the latest titles to show us when we walked in. She had a piano in the store and on special events someone played live music. It was the most child-friendly store I knew and the owner Jane Millen always shows her love for children. I also love Amazing Grace Resource Center in Mullica Hill, NJ. The owner, Justine Green, is very creative and supportive of writers. She creates events and makes shopping fun for everyone. She and her family are wonderful. I had great times with multi-author Christmas signings and doing a girl's craft workshop.

In what ways do you consider your local Christian bookstore important?

I always find I become friends with the owner/manager. It's a great place to find books to read and see people finding books to treasure that impact their lives.

VITAL STATISTICS

Birthday: July 17

Birthplace: New Haven, CT

Siblings: 2 brothers

Current home: Maryland's eastern shore

Husband: Jim

Children: three sons, two daughters (one daughter just wrote a book with me)