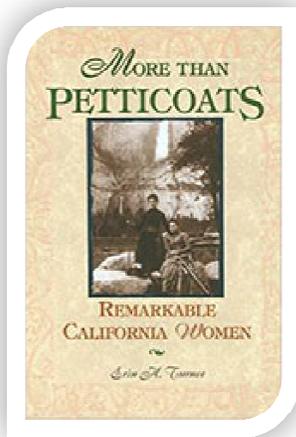


## Readin' & Writin' with Lauraine- March 2014



This is one of those winters where I am really grateful I live in California. We had snow in December and while more would be welcome, our snowplows remain parked. We pray for any drop of moisture we can get, but I am really enjoying the sunny days. I admit I am a weather wuss. I complain about the cold when temperatures are in the teens, and can't imagine what my friends in other parts of the country must endure with temperatures below the zero mark for days, and that's not even including the wind chill factor. The daffodils have sure been brightening up my backyard. I keep reminding my blooming roses we could still have a bad freeze, but as usual they ignore me. Both sure signs of spring.

Although my schedule seems to be filled with appointments, classes and meetings, I have been able to carve out some time for reading; always a welcome gift. This month I'd like to introduce you to an entire series of thumbnail biographies spotlighting women, called *More Than Petticoats*. Each book contains the stories of remarkable women of that particular region. I chose *More than Petticoats: Remarkable California Women* by Erin H. Turner. It was an engaging read, and a marvelous way to learn more of California's history as many of these women helped create that history.

Some of them I'd heard of before, like the darling of early films, Mary Pickford. And Sarah Winchester, whose money and dreams built the bizarre domicile known as the Winchester Mystery House. Others played more behind-the-scenes roles, like Toby Riddle—a Modoc Indian woman, who fought to save many lives, both Native American

and white during the Modoc Wars. Mary Austin's personal life would make a riveting soap opera, and led her to become a multi-published author. Mary Ellen Pleasant was a financial genius, who not only propelled banker Thomas Bell to a place of prominence, but owned a good portion of San Francisco, as well. The scandals made fascinating reading. Florence Hutchins, a young woman who ignored the strictures of society, guided both family and guests around Yosemite to share her love of the mountains and promote the park. Pioneer Jessie Benton Fremont, wife of explorer John Charles Fremont used her pen to stimulate interest in the West and thereby expand our country. As an added value, at the end of each book in the *More Than Petticoat* series, there is an index to help readers find specific bibliographies more easily. I can't wait to read more books in this series, as I am sure the stories about the women in the other states are equally as fascinating as those in California.

I would not have found this book had not two friends read it and insisted I do so, too. When readers recommend what they've read to their friends, we are all the richer for it. So if you find a book you really enjoy, share it with others.

I am currently writing away, working on book two in the new Songs of Blessing series, which continues the lives of the Bjorklund family and the folks of Blessing, ND. Book one, *To Everything a Season* will be released in September. On July 1, check out your favorite bookstore for *Heaven Sent Rain*. My copy has arrived, so I know it is for real now. If you want to keep in touch, join me on Facebook or Twitter.

Until next time,

*Happy readin' & writin' from Lauraine*