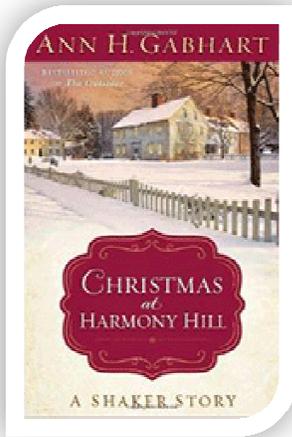


Readin' & Writin' with Lauraine- November 2014



I am not ready to write, think, or read about Christmas--- yet. I love the whole Christmas season, but not until Thanksgiving is over. Yes, I am indeed old fashioned. I look forward to reading Christmas books, watching Christmas movies on TV and most of all listening to Christmas music.

I usually fill this month's column with recommendations about books for kids. Maybe we'll talk about those next month. Since I wanted to change my December column and write about adult books for a change, I bent my never-before-Thanksgiving rule. I finished reading my first Christmas novella of the year just the other day.

I know some wonderful authors, and hopefully you know them too because I like to share them with you. Writer Ann H. Gabhart has shown up in my column before, mainly because *Angel Sister* is my favorite of her many books. She often writes about the Shaker community and her *Christmas at Harmony Hill* is as captivating as all the others. The story is set during the Civil War, and we meet Heather and her husband Gideon, who is waiting for his orders to go to battle. Heather chooses to become a washer woman so she can remain close to him, but when she becomes pregnant, he sends her home to have the baby.

Ann does a marvelous job of telling their story from both the female and male points of view. Heather is forced to seek out her aunt Sophrena in the Shaker community of Harmony Hill, because her father refuses her plea to let her come home. She committed

the unforgiveable sin of marrying a Yankee. Forgiveness is so critical to all of us and this story is a good example of how we manage to mess up our lives when we allow hate and anger to take over our hearts. This author packed a lot of story into a novella length, and it will remain on my bookshelves with the other Christmas stories I have collected.

Writing Christmas stories and novellas can be both challenging and exciting. People have such high expectations of books written about Christmas. Through the years I have written five Christmas novellas. My first endeavor is called *Dakota December* and is part of a series. It can be found in a compilation paired with *Dakota Destiny*. In my historical *Yuletide Treasures*, Arley Hooper convinces a recluse woodcarver and violinist to help her create a dollhouse for the girls at a local orphanage. In *The Gift*, I tell the story of a wounded boy and an old horse set in my hometown of Tehachapi. Last year brought *A Pioneer Christmas*, a collection by nine authors who tell tales centered across the country about character who reside in primitive housing. My story in the collection was set in the Dakota Territory in a sod house and called *The Cowboy's Angel*. I think I fell in love with both the angel and the cowboy in this one. These are all available at Tehachapi Treasure Trove, on my website and from many other retailers.

I wish each of you a merry and most blessed Christmas season, and hope you all get and give gifts of books. May you also receive hugs and laughter, joy and keeper memories.

Until next time,

Happy readin' & writin' from Lauraine