

AUTHOR'S NOTES  
AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Angel Sister* is a story from the heart. My heart and my mother's heart. The events and characters in the book all rose up out of that mysterious deep well that is a writer's imagination and are completely fictitious, but that well was fed by the many stories I heard from my mother and her sisters about growing up in the small community of Alton during the Depression years. My Rosey Corner is the Alton of their memories. My Merritt family is very, very loosely based on their family. My grandmother and grandfather did love to read. My grandfather was a blacksmith and did at one time have a drinking problem. He did serve in France during World War I. That much of the story is based on fact. But he was a cook and didn't have to go "over the top" and up out of the trenches into combat. My Fern and Graham are the fleshed-out characters brought to mind by

the stories my aunts and mother used to tell about some of the odder characters in their community. The place seemed to have more than its share of odd characters, including, as my aunt Bill used to say, “them”—the four Hawkins sisters. And then she would laugh.

I took the feeling of the wonderful memories they shared and from those seeds created my Rosey Corner and my family of four sisters. So to the first four sisters—Evelyn, Olga, Margaret, and Bill—I am completely indebted for the atmosphere and background of this book. The rest I made up by imagining how it might have been and what would have happened if. That is a fiction writer’s privilege and joy. My aunts and mother loved to laugh and talk about the days back when. My mother is the only sister left now, but if my aunts were still living, I know they would have enjoyed going back to Rosey Corner with me.

Once a story makes it out of a writer’s heart and onto paper, many people have to help it along its journey toward becoming a book. I’m grateful to my wonderful editor, Lonnie Hull DuPont, who is always ready to share an encouraging word. I’m especially thankful for her enthusiasm for this story that had her digging through trash cans to find out the “rest of the story” after accidentally throwing away part of the original manuscript. I appreciate all the people at Revell Books and Baker Publishing Group who do so much to help make my books better with careful editing, make them look good with great cover art, and then get them out there in front of readers. I also thank Lettie Lee for believing in my stories through the years. And I can’t forget to mention the friendship and support of Wendy Lawton, who stands ready to help me in so many ways.

Ann H. Gabhart

Always I thank the Lord for giving me the desire to write and for gifting me with this story. Last of all, I appreciate each of you who picked up this book and let my story come to life in your imagination. Thank you for inviting the Merritt family into your heart.