

## **Research or Obsession?**

I admit it. I'm a research junkie. Now it's out there. I've been known to search for days, through reading or on the Internet, for just the right historical detail to make a scene more genuine.

In writing ***An Eye for Glory***, this meant reading everything I could find about the men of the 14<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, the places they went, the food they ate, the hardships they faced, and the role they played in the many battles of the Army of the Potomac. And after reading about those battles, I of course had to visit the battlefields and walk where they walked. I also read several diaries and memoirs, not only to learn the style of writing, but also to glean tidbits about the weather, which I recorded in a day by day calendar that I developed for the entire time frame of the novel.

The research for ***Until Shiloh Comes***, the first book of the Shiloh Trilogy, was quite different, but no less interesting. Again, there was lots of reading about the Battle of Shiloh and a visit to the battlefield as well. But I also tracked down both the population and agricultural censuses of McNairy County, Tennessee for 1860. The population data showed a detailed count, family by family, of who lived there, how many slaves they owned, if any. The agricultural data for the county included, types of livestock kept, headcounts of each type, the kinds and amounts of crops they raised, and also the amount of products made, such as molasses from sorghum. I also researched the history of the old Shiloh Church and the practice of holding open-air camp meetings.

So, where has my research taken me in books two and three of the trilogy? Vicksburg, Natchez and Corinth, Mississippi, and Andersonville, Georgia. I've also read extensively on the Vicksburg Campaign of 1863, including first-person accounts by citizens who lived through the siege. Among other resources, I've read Sherman's memoirs of the Vicksburg and Atlanta Campaigns, two books by Admiral David D. Porter, and lots of material written by Union POWs at Andersonville.

Another invaluable resource is the Library of Congress. The digital archives include countless Civil War maps, sketches, photos, and documents. You can also find old maps and photos of towns and cities. This is how I found some valuable details about Memphis and Vicksburg.

All of this research is done with one goal in mind—to take you, the reader, to another place and time that is as authentic as possible.