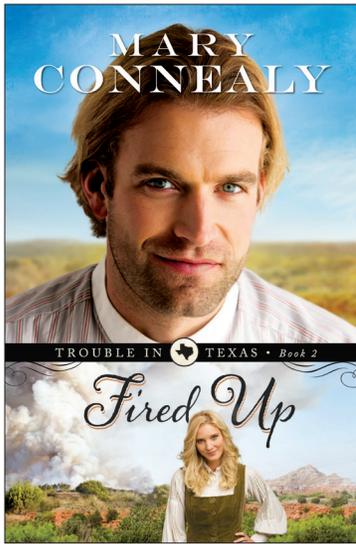




QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH MARY CONNEALY



Fired Up

TRouble in Texas #2
by Mary Connealy

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1. The connection between the heroes in the TROUBLE IN TEXAS series is Andersonville Prison, where they met. How does this create a bond?

My heroes were part of a group inside Andersonville called The Regulators. They were given the task of bringing law and order to the prison. Because of the terrible conditions—starvation, sickness, filth—in Andersonville, many of the men descended into near animal-like behavior to survive, and terrible crimes were committed. When the Regulators began to keep the peace, some prisoners welcomed that, and some—the ones causing trouble—hated it. Some good men considered the Regulators to be traitors to the North, in collusion with the South. So there was danger for the Regulators at every turn, and they formed an incredibly tight bond to protect each other. This bond, in my book, survives after the war, and they all meet up to fight at each other’s side when one of them faces trouble in Texas.

2. You’ve got a woman who can’t cook running a diner. What made you think of such a thing?

I actually based Glynna’s cooking skills a bit on my own. One line in *Fired Up* is Glynna’s son saying, “Cooking is a word that has never exactly meant the same thing to my ma that it means to others. She seems to have a powerful fear of rawness.” I don’t know why, but I just seem to always, even after all these years, leave the food on just a bit too long. I also have a tendency to wander off, go start writing, turn the stove on high, and start daydreaming. This far too often leads to billowing black smoke in my kitchen. I have long ago disconnected the smoke alarm in my kitchen just because I set it off too often. So Glynna seems like a very realistic character to me.

3. You have Dare Riker extolling the virtues of carbolic acid in *Fired Up*, but it was a very new invention at the time of this book. Why did you use it?

I very deliberately chose to have Dare using such a cutting edge (for the time) product because Dare, though he lacked the education to be an official doctor, was a voracious reader, seeking medical knowledge. I wanted to present him as highly skilled through hard work, reading, and always seeking the best treatment. So he would have read about this disinfectant. He would have tried it. The carbolic acid was my way of showing that Dare was an intelligent man and a highly skilled doctor even though he lacks formal education.

4. There’s an amazing story in *Fired Up* about a baby born in Andersonville prison. How could there be a baby born in a prison camp full of men?

That story of a baby born in Andersonville is absolutely true. Dare Riker’s part in that story is fictionalized, but I found first-person accounts in several places that included the name of the woman and her husband who were imprisoned there. They were taken captive on their honeymoon, and though he was not fighting, he was a soldier, so they sent his wife home and kept him. But she wouldn’t leave him. So, somehow (this part remains unknown), she disguised herself as a man and was locked up in Andersonville with him. The baby boy was born nearly eighteen months later. So she became pregnant while in that place, carried the baby for nine months, and the fact that she was a woman was never revealed. It only came to light when the baby was born and it started crying. It’s a fascinating story, and the accounts I’ve read were moving. I could feel the powerful emotions in those old diary entries. I thought, if one of the medics in the prison—Dare Riker, for example—was involved in that baby’s birth, it would have affected him just as powerfully and helped him see a better side of doctoring. It might even have awakened a desire to continue doctoring after the war, even though he had no schooling or formal training for it.