

PRAISE FOR BLEST BE THE TIE

As a historian, Deborah Sweaney placed her first two books into historical context, causing the reader to understand how local events and people connect to larger, national history. *Blest Be the Tie* is no exception. It is both an intimate portrayal of four generations of women whose lives, experiences and strength helped shape America, and a history of a particular time and place. Sweaney makes one appreciate the extraordinary lives of 'ordinary' people.

Cathy Gorn, Ph.D.
Executive Director
National History Day

Deborah has written the story that so many of us have dreamed of writing; the story of our mothers and grandmothers. The story we want so desperately to pass down to our daughters and granddaughters so they will know – truly know – the women who came before. She has told the story of her mothers. It is also the story of a multitude of women from the “greatest” generations. Our daughters should read it. Our granddaughters should hear it.

Laura Bullion
Former Archivist, State Historical Society of Missouri

Blest Be the Tie is a captivating account through four generations of courageous women and their families. Reading it felt like entering another world -- where the characters and history came to life. The book has extra charm for Laura Ingalls Wilder' fans, as it closely parallels Laura's life, and brings back memories of reading the Little house series.

Amy Garcia
First Grade teacher and a Laura Fan

Anna, Carrie, Iris; in fact all the members of Deborah's family became very real to me through the pages of *Blest Be the Tie*. Their stories resonated with me, and through them I gained a greater appreciation of the legacy passed on to me by the women in my own family.

Robin Atwood Fidler
Former museum educator, Maryland Historical Society

I absolutely love *Blest Be the Tie*. Deborah Sweaney has done a remarkable job. I especially like the way she interweaves the stories of her family with the larger historical context, and connects that context to her own life. *Blest Be the Tie* illustrates how history is personal for all of us as the effects of events are passed down to us as part of our family legacy. I think all serious students of history should read the book to better understand this personal connection we all have with the past. Historians often talk about how the event of the past continue to shape the present, but they rarely seem to address the role of family as a major conduit for the influence of history on individuals. Well done!

Jeffrey Hawks
Education Director
Army Heritage Center Foundation
State Coordinator
National History Day in Pennsylvania

Once again, Deborah Sweaney has allowed the reader to feel like an eyewitness to history through the actions and deeds of her female ancestors, Anna (Great Grandmother), Carrie (Grandmother), and Iris (mother). If one has ever wondered how their lives impact history and vice versa, then *Blest Be the Tie* is for them. Through effortless storytelling, Sweaney allows the reader to feel like they are a part of key events in American history, from the Panic of 1893 and the Great Depression to World War II and the Baby Boom. One will feel like they can identify with the women of Sweaney's past as the events of time unfold. And the reader will come to realize, as Sweaney aptly notes, that "our actions can ripple across generations." After reading *Blest Be the Tie*, one will find themselves wanting to know more about their own family's past and realize how familial ties create a strong link to the past while creating a sturdy bridge to the future. For Sweaney tells us that "Life does not always follow a direct path...there are curves on the road and bumps along the way....there are detours that take us away from our intended destination." It is these curves, bumps, and detours that make Sweaney's ancestors' story the American story. Her craft at storytelling make this an enjoyable and thought-provoking work, no matter what age the reader may be.

Kevin Wagner
Award Winning History Teacher
Recipient of the 2017 Race to the Stars Award

I may be a little biased, but I believe that Debby's growth as an author is on full display in the third and final installment of her Missouri trilogy. Her use of the Laura Ingalls Wilder "Little House on the Prairie" series to bring to life the times of our great grandparents is truly

entertaining and there is enough history throughout to maintain the interest of those less familiar with the subjects of her work. Sweeping in its scope, "Blest be the Tie" should appeal to the fans of J. D. Vance's acclaimed work "Hillbilly Elegy."

Jim Sweaney