Through Many Dangers

Book 1: 208 pages.
Book 2: 216 pages.
Set: $23.95.

The book Through Many Dangers by P. M. Kuiper is written for boys and girls of middle- and high-school age, but my two sons, who are in their twenties, and I, their mother, enjoyed it very much. This is the mark of a really good book.

The author states in his Afterword: “Historical fiction presents a number of challenges, one of which is how to weave historical events into a fictional story.” Not only did he stay close to his sources, but also he wrote a great story that is compelling, moves quickly, and stays with readers for a long time.

The Civil War timeline and the glossary of unfamiliar terms are helpful. The book is beautifully illustrated by Paula Barone, but in the story the drawings are made and sent home by the main character, Harm.

The book is published in two parts, but buyers get both parts for one price. This means two kids can read it at the same time.

While kids learn in school about the Civil War and might learn in church about the Dutch settlement in Holland, Michigan, rarely do these topics overlap.

The Reformed and Dutch dominie Albertus Van Raalte fled persecution in the Netherlands and emigrated with his whole congregation to the United States, where they would enjoy freedom of religion. They settled in West Michigan, where they founded the town of Holland. Soon more settlers came and started other towns with Dutch names surrounding Holland.

Van Raalte was much more than a pastor for his congregants-settlers during the first extremely difficult years. He was a leader who succeeded in keeping the whole community close to God in faith. He was strongly against slavery and encouraged the young men in the community to join the Union Army during the Civil War. This is where the story starts.

We follow the group of Dutch young boys on their adventures as part of one company from Michigan as they make their way all the way to Atlanta. They are being trained as soldiers and have to fight in several battles. There are times of plenty and rest, and times of shortages and cold winters. When they finally return after three years, they all have grown into men.

Most remarkably, the book seamlessly engages with some
And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.

So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.

So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

—Luke 2:1–7 NJKV