

The Border Papers

Primary research for *The Lord's Captive*

Primary documents, those which are "original documents or objects created at the time of study," are an important tool in any historical fiction author's toolbox. Historical romance, a form of historical fiction, is no exception, and I utilize primary texts for a variety of reasons.

Getting a better feel for the language, construction realistic yet fictional names, and obtaining information directly from the source are all reasons primary documents are important for my book research.

On the other hand, I absolutely take some liberties with the

information. For example, upon finding "The Border Papers: A Calendar of Letters and Papers Relating to the Affairs of the Borders of England and Scotland," while researching for *The Lord's Captive*, I was immediately enthralled.

They offered innumerable insight into life along the Anglo-Scottish border. So many historical tidbits and facts that could be weaved into my tale. The only problem? The Border Papers are dated 1560-1594, a full 300 years after our story. So the facts are entirely unusable, correct? Not so fast. Thus is the beauty of historical *fiction*.



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Trial by Combat

The history behind Bryce and Toren's battle



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Perhaps the most startling fact about the trial by combat is the fact that it actually existed in the middle ages. Also known the "wager of battle" in England, this fight to the death (or disablement) was very real. Although replaced by trial by jury not long after the time period of our story, a trial such as Bryce and Toren's was regulated by a variety of rules. From the type of weapons used to the time of day it was to be conducted (before noon, hence Bryce's early-morning abandonment,) the trial was to be fought with a second, or squire, for support. And while technically illegal, many did indeed use a champion to fight in their stead.

Who would you choose as your trial by combat champion? Share using #BorderSeries on Twitter!