

United States Historical Fiction Grades 7 and 8



**Youth Services Department
Skokie Public Library**

Colonial Period, 1600-1775

Cooney, Caroline B. **The Ransom of Mercy Carter.** 2001.

(Jr High Fiction COO)

Master suspense writer Caroline Cooney has taken an actual historical event and written a story of how one young girl might have experienced it. In 1704, at the height of the French and Indian War, the Kahnawake Mohawk Tribe raided and burned the English settlement of Deerfield, Massachusetts. In this gripping novel, eleven-year-old Mercy Carter is taken prisoner by the tribe and forced to walk north to an Indian settlement in Canada.

Hemphill, Stephanie. **Wicked Girls: A Novel of the Salem Witch Trials.** 2010.

(Jr High Fiction HEM)

In 1692, accusations of witchcraft made by young girls in the town of Salem, Massachusetts, led to the hangings of nine innocent people. This verse novel is written in the voices of three of those girls. Why would they do such a thing? Read and find out.

Revolutionary War Period, 1775-1783

Goodman, Joan E. **Hope's Crossing.** 1998.

(Jr High Fiction GOO)

Thirteen-year-old Hope Wakeman's father has gone to join General Washington's army, leaving his wife, new baby and three daughters alone. Hope, the eldest, promises to be brave and take care of the family. She keeps her promise until the night British loyalists break into the house, steal what they can, and burn the rest. Then they kidnap Hope, telling her mother that she must pay to get her daughter back.

Paulsen, Gary. **Woods Runner.** 2010.

*(Jr High Fiction PAU)

Thirteen-year-old Samuel's parents are city folk, trying to learn to live on the Pennsylvania frontier. Samuel, however, is completely at home in the wilderness that surrounds their settlement. One day he returns home from the woods to find his home burned to the ground and his parents missing. The Revolutionary War has come to rural Pennsylvania.

Civil War, 1861-1865

Elliott, Laura Malone. **Annie, Between the States.** 2004.

(Jr High Fiction ELL)

Poetry-loving Annie Sinclair's Virginia home is right in the center of the action in the early stages of the Civil War. Annie is fiercely loyal to the Confederate side. She nurses and conceals Confederate soldiers and warns them of Union plans. Annie is sure she knows which side is right – until the day a wounded, poetry-loving Union soldier shows up at her door.

Fleischman, Paul. **Bull Run.** 1993.

*(J Fiction FLE)

Is war the same for everyone? Here are accounts of the first great battle of the Civil War, told by sixteen different people: a soldier, a child, a slave, a doctor, and many others. You'll be surprised at the way different viewpoints color the same event.

Paulsen, Gary. **Soldier's Heart: A Novel of the Civil War.** 1998.

*(Jr High Fiction PAU)

If you're interested in the gritty details of war, you'll enjoy this book which follows fifteen-year-old Charlie from enlistment to training, camp life, four battles and his discharge.

Peck, Richard. **The River Between Us.** 2003.

*(Jr High Fiction PEC)

In southern Illinois at the start of the Civil War, two women get off a boat from New Orleans and are taken in as boarders by Tilly Pruitt's mother. Tilly wonders about the women – especially when her twin brother Noah falls in love with one of them .

Rinaldi, Ann. **Sarah's Ground.** 2004.

(Jr High Fiction RIN)

Not all the struggles of war take place on the battlefield. In 1861, eighteen-year-old Sarah accepts a position as caretaker of Mount Vernon, historic site and home of George Washington's tomb. Museums, historical monuments and all cultural buildings can be in great danger during wartime. It is Sarah's job to protect Mount Vernon with her life – a job made all the more difficult because of prevailing attitudes about women.

Gold Rush, latter 19th Century

Blos, Joan W. **Letters from the Corrugated Castle: A Novel of Gold Rush California, 1850-1852.** 2007.

(J Fiction BLO)

It is 1850, the height of the gold rush. Thirteen-year-old Eldora lives in San Francisco, a town that is growing larger every day as more and more prospective gold-miners move in. She writes letters to her cousin Sallie in New York, describing her life in a city that is young and bustling with energy and excitement.

Gregory, Kristiana. **Seeds of Hope: The Gold Rush Diary of Susanna Fairchild (California Territory, 1849).** 2001.

(J Fiction DEA)

Fourteen-year-old Susanna's father has planned to move from Missouri to Oregon to settle near friends and relatives and open his medical practice there. Susanna is looking forward to seeing people she knows and loves after her long journey. But after her father hears that gold has been discovered in San Francisco, he decides to settle there instead and make his fortune mining for gold. Susanna's journal reveals what life was really like in a San Francisco mining camp in 1849.

Hobbs, Will. **Jason's Gold.** 1999.

*(Jr High Fiction HOB)

It is 1897, and gold has been discovered in the Yukon. Fifteen-year-old Jason decides this will be an easy way to get rich quick, and he heads north.

World War I, 1914-1918

Harrar, George. **The Trouble With Jeremy Chance.** 2003.

(J Fiction HAR)

The war is over, and twelve-year-old Jeremy is anxiously waiting for his soldier brother to return to their New Hampshire town. But a disagreement with his father so outrages Jeremy that he decides to head for Boston to meet his brother there.

Rostkowski, Margaret I. **After the Dancing Days.** 1986.

(Jr Hi Fiction ROS)

Fourteen-year-old Annie Metcalf waits excitedly at the train station for her father. Dr. Metcalf has been treating wounded soldiers in New York for the duration of World War I, and at last he is coming back home to their small Kansas town. But Annie's anticipation turns to shock when she sees the wounded soldiers who get off the train with her father. When Dr. Metcalf decides to continue treating soldiers at the local veterans' hospital, Annie goes along – and meets a wounded soldier named Andrew.

Great Depression, 1929-1933

Hesse, Karen. **Out of the Dust.** 1997.

*(J Fiction HES)

How do you live through a natural disaster so powerful that it almost destroys you and all you have? It is Oklahoma in 1934. Fourteen-year-old Billy Jo tells us about living in the Dust Bowl, the part of the country that was plagued by catastrophic drought and dust storms during the Great Depression. Disease, famine and death caused thousands of people to migrate west. But Billy Jo's family stays. Written in easy-to-read poetry, *Out of the Dust* is their story.

Peck, Richard. **A Long Way from Chicago.** 1998.

*(J Fiction PEC)

Every August starting in 1929, Joey and Mary Alice are sent out of Chicago to spend a week with their Grandma Dowdel in her small town in downstate Illinois. Apparently, their parents think that getting out of the city will be a good influence on the children. Little do they know that Grandma can lie, cheat and steal with the best of them!

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. **Esperanza Rising.** 2000.

*(Jr High Fiction RYA)

Fourteen-year-old Esperanza lives a pampered life at her father's flourishing vineyard in Mexico. But a sudden, horrible tragedy forces Esperanza and her family to emigrate to the United States where they begin a new life as migrant workers. Esperanza comes face to face with poverty, prejudice and backbreaking labor.

Wyatt, Leslie J. **Poor Is Just a Starting Place.** 2005.

(Jr High Fiction WYA)

What is real poverty like? Twelve-year-old Artesia Wilson knows. Her family lives in rural Kentucky during the Depression, and she spends her days tending her family's farm and dreaming of escaping the constant hunger and drudgery of her life. How does Artie hope to break the cycle? A local contest is offering a \$25.00 savings bond for the best essay.

World War II, 1939-1945

Cheaney, J.B. **My Friend the Enemy.** 2005.

(Jr High Fiction CHE)

The home front was also a time of conflict during World War II. Eleven-year-old Hazel's father and brother are fighting overseas, and now her dear friend and neighbor Jed is going too. Hazel promises Jed that she will check on his parents at their farm while he is gone. Keeping her promise, she discovers that Jed's parents have a secret. They are hiding someone who could be in great danger if he were discovered. Should she tell?

Kerr, M.E. **Slap Your Sides: A Novel.** 2001.

(Jr High Fiction KER)

Thirteen-year-old Jubal Shoemaker is the youngest son of a Quaker family in Pennsylvania. Everyone knows that the Shoemakers are pacifists. Yet when Jubal's older brother Bud registers as a conscientious objector, he provokes hostility and derision in their small town. As the war progresses, Jubal finds himself questioning his family's beliefs: is it really morally wrong to fight Hitler? Is it morally wrong not to?

Mazer, Harry. **A Boy At War: A Novel of Pearl Harbor.** 2001.

(Jr High Fiction MAZ)

Adam is the son of a naval officer, so his family moves all the time. This time, they've moved to Honolulu, where Adam's biggest problem is how to fit in at his new high school – until the bombing of Pearl Harbor changes everything.

Vietnam War Era, 1964-1975

Dowell, Frances O'Roark. **Shooting the Moon.** 2008.

*(J Fiction DOW)

Twelve-year-old Jamie Dexter is an army brat who believes in the glory of fighting for your country. Her dad is the commanding officer at Fort Hood, her brother T.J. has just decided to enlist and fight in Vietnam, and Jamie couldn't be prouder. Then T.J., an amateur photographer, starts to send undeveloped film home, and when Jamie develops it she begins to see war in a different light.

Hobbs, Valerie. **Sonny's War.** 2002.

(Jr High Fiction HOB)

The Vietnam era was a time of enormous social change. Between the years of 1967 and 1968, Corin changes from an ordinary high school girl to a young woman who begins to question everything she was taught about right and wrong. What happened in the course of a year that changed her so much? Her beloved older brother Sonny was drafted and sent to Vietnam.

Hughes, Dean. **Search and Destroy.** 2005.

(Jr High Fiction HUG)

The only thing that high school senior Rick Ward knows for sure is that after graduation he's got to get out of his abusive home. So he decides to join the army, and hopes to be sent into combat. The year is 1969. The combat is Vietnam.

Wiles, Deborah. **Countdown.** 2010.

(J Fiction WIL)

In October 1962, President Kennedy announced to the nation that Russia had constructed missiles in Cuba which were capable of reaching the United States mainland. For thirteen days, the nation lived in fear of nuclear war. This historical event was known as the Cuban Missile Crisis, and eleven-year-old Franny tells us what it was like to live during that time.



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