

**1997**



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## **1997 JEFFERSON CUP AWARD**

### **THE ORNAMENT TREE**

by Jean Thesman

Houghton Mifflin, 1996. Grades 7-10

The Ornament Tree tells the story of recently orphaned Bonnie Shaster, age fourteen, who moves to Seattle in 1918 to live with her genteel, elderly cousins. The Devereaux's reduced financial circumstances have forced them to take in an eclectic group of boarders. The women are very progressive for 1918, as they support women's suffrage, birth control, and the elimination of child labor. Conflicts between the boarders, as well as domestic help difficulties, play out against a devastating flu epidemic, labor strikes, class distinctions, and physical disabilities. Bonnie desperately wants to help her beloved intellectual cousins who are encouraging her to grow.

Jean Thesman's subtle tone compliments the theme of women's rights, class distinctions, and labor issues by providing an enlightened and educated point of view. Thesman utilizes the boardinghouse setting to create conflicts between characters. She also demonstrates the effect historical events have on the boarders as in the case of Mr. Johnson who manages a shipyard during the general strike. The symbolic ornament tree serves as a unifying element. Thesman seamlessly intertwines historical events, characterization, theme, and plot into a unified whole conveying a strong sense of time and place so important to historical fiction



## HONOR BOOKS

### THE WAGON

**by Tony Johnston.** Tambourine Books, 1996. Grades 1-3

On a Carolina morning a child is born. A child whose skin, "like smooth, dark wood", makes him a salve. Johnston's skillful use of contrasts and simile, perfectly matched with and enhanced by Ransome's light and dark illustrations, tell the story of a young slave boy working for his master and longing for the one thing he cannot have --- freedom to go where he pleases and "to do what free boys do". As the boy recounts his life as a slave and dreams of being carried to a better place, the reader can experience with him a gamut of emotions—from the despair, anger and hatred of slavery to the jubilation of freedom's arrival and the sadness of hearing of Mr. Lincoln's death. A very emotional and unforgettable look at slavery.

### TRAIN TO SOMEWHERE

**by Eve Bunting.** Clarion Books, 1996. Grades 2-6

Eve Bunting's powerful text tells an emotional story of a young girl who is heading west on an Orphan Train with fourteen other children. Marianne is sure that her mother will be waiting for her somewhere along the way. After all, her mother promised her that she would be back to get her—before Christmas—but Marianne has waited so many Christmases. Now she is heading west, too. Stop after stop, Marianne searches the crowd for her mother. As some of the children are chosen to be adopted, no one shows any interest in adopting plain Marianne. Then the train makes its final stop in a place called Somewhere.

This heart warming, emotional story mixed with Ronald Himler's beautiful illustrations gives the reader an emotional account of the Orphan Trains that traveled west from the 1850's until the 1920's.

## WORTHY OF SPECIAL NOTE

### FULL STEAM AHEAD: THE ROAD TO BUILD A TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

**by Rhoda Blumberg.** National Geographic Society, 1996. Grades 5 and up.

Rhoda Blumberg's extensive research is evident as she leads the reader through the harrowing, sometimes deadly experiences, of the men who built the transcontinental railroad. After the Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 was signed the Central Pacific Company, building east, and the Union Pacific Railroad, building west of the Mississippi River, set out to win the race, often dealing in underhanded tactics meant to defraud the government. The celebration on May 10, 1869 was a monstrous occasion throughout the United States as the final spike was driven, more so than at Promontory Summit where onlookers were trying to find the gold spike and souvenirs. The well-written, well documented text, along with many pictures and illustrations, captures the tenor of those who built the transcontinental railroad.

### THE APPRENTICESHIP OF LUCAS WHITAKER

**by Cynthia DeFelice.** Farrar Straus Giroux, 1996. Grades 4-7

In 1849, the only cure mentioned for consumption is a macabre practice of unearthing a deceased relative who has died of consumption. Young Lucas Whitaker wishes he had known of the "cure" before his mother died. Perhaps he could have saved her. Scared, alone, and grieving, Lucas leaves his home and ends up in Southwick where he becomes the apprentice of Doc Beecher. Lucas does not understand why Doc does not use the cure for this dread disease. Although Doc tells Lucas this so called cure is nonsense, Lucas still believes that there is a way to help the dying people around him and he sets out to prove Doc wrong.

The Apprenticeship of Lucas Whitaker is an interesting and gripping story of people who are desperate and will go to great lengths to save their loved ones from the disease we now know as tuberculosis.

### AN AMERICAN HERO: THE TRUE STORY OF CHARLES E. LINDBERGH

**by Barry Denenberg.** Scholastic, 1996. Grades 8 and up

Barry Denenberg's excellent, well researched biography captures Lindbergh's drive to succeed, as well as his desire to remain a private person. The author uses quotes from Anne Morrow Lindbergh's diaries and letters and quotes from Charles' writings, and the hour by hour log during the flight to Paris to give the reader a keener insight into Lindbergh's struggles throughout his life.

### THE LIFE AND DEATH OF CRAZY HORSE

**by Russell Freedman.** Holiday House, 1996. Grades 5-8

Crazy Horse was a sensitive youth who became the greatest of all Teton Sioux warriors. Faithful to a vision, he rode into battle with a single hawk feather in his hair and a few hailspots on his body. His most courageous victory was leading warriors against General Custer in the Battle of Little Bighorn on June 26, 1876. He never signed a treaty with the white men and he resisted them all his life.

Russell Freedman retells the legend of courage and idealism of an uncompromising warrior who died for his beliefs.

### THE UNBREAKABLE CODE

**by Sara Hunter.** Northland Publishers, 1996. Grades 2-4

Author Sara Hunter's clear writing style and Julia Miner's warm color illustrations highlight a little known moment in the history of World War II—the participation of Navy code breakers in communication efforts during battle in the Pacific. However, there is another story here about the special relationship between the grandson who tells the story of being a code breaker and the grandson who must find his own courage to deal with the death of his father. This unique tale is given extra force as it is played out against the backdrop of the Southwest landscape.

### SMALL STEPS: THE YEAR I GOT POLIO

**by Peg Kehret.** Albert Whitman, 1996. Grades 4-6

Peg Schulze, a seventh grader in Austin, Minnesota, was looking forward to the Homecoming parade that afternoon. Her world was transformed in a nightmare of fear and pain as she fell victim to infantile paralysis or as it was commonly known, polio. Peg Schulze Kehret, recalls those long months as she strives to overcome the effects of the dreaded disease.

Suffering the worst form of polio, Peg was transferred to University Hospital in Minneapolis from the Sheltering Arms Hospital. Her days were filled with pain, loneliness, and anxiety about her future. With loving support from her parents, and a new treatment for polio, Peg began to improve. She was moved back to Sheltering Arms Hospital for physical therapy, and to a whole new world. Sharing her room with four other girls, Peg began experiencing the joy of relationships that uniquely bound them together through suffering. Seven months later, Peg Schulze, walked slowly with her walking sticks down the halls of her old school. Although she knew she would never be as strong physically as she once was, she knew in her heart she was much stronger in many ways.

### THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE

**by Elizabeth Mann.** Mikaya Press, 1996. Grades 4-7.

The story of the world's most famous bridge has fascinated generations of Americans. Elizabeth Mann provides a new generation of readers with a memorable experience. The text is not only lively and interesting, but resonates with the voices of those involved in the design and creation of the bridge. The illustrations, a mix of period photographs and art, underscore the telling of this engineering feat.



## A YOUNG PATRIOT: THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AS EXPERIENCED BY ONE BOY

by **Jim Murphy**. Houghton Mifflin, 1996. Grades 5-9

Joseph Plumb Martin, an adventurous boy, heard the details of early skirmishes from soldiers who stopped at his grandfathers farm in Connecticut. In July, 1776, he enlisted at the local tavern for a period of six months and served until the war ended in 1783. Joseph's first encounter with the British in New York made him realize his fears and confusion were shared by other soldiers. He served under Washington and wintered at Valley Forge. Joseph's curiosity, creativity, and humorous nature helped him survive the trials and triumphs of army life. Jim Murphy weaves the historical facts and the memoirs of Joseph Martin in a compelling image of the American Revolution.

## JOHN STEINBECK

by **Catherine Reef**. Clarion Books, 1996. Grades 7-10

In this well-written and very readable biography John Steinbeck grows from a sixteen year-old hopeful, too shy to give publishers his real name and address, to a world traveling modern author and winner of a Nobel Prize for Literature. Steinbeck is portrayed both as a simple man with foibles of his own, and as a man who writes with a mission of "making people understand each other". Through in depth research of Steinbeck's life and skillful use of quotes from his own works and photographs of the people he wrote about, Reef has written a fascinating biography. The story not only chronicles Steinbeck's life, but also the history of America from the turn of the century through the 60's.

## SECOND DAUGHTER: THE STORY OF A SLAVE GIRL

by **Mildred Walter**. Scholastic, 1996. Grades 6-10

The year is 1781 and slavery has been abolished in Massachusetts. The cry for independence and equality that began before and continued during the Revolutionary War inspired many blacks to seek their freedom from 1773 to 1779. Mildred Walter creates the story of one such slave in Second Daughter, based on the actual account of Mum Bett who sued her owner for her freedom under the Massachusetts Constitution and won.

The story unfolds as Bett's younger sister, Aissa, narrates their struggle for survival and hope for freedom in a system that killed their parents and cast them into a seemingly endless life of servitude. As slave to a prominent Massachusetts family, Bett, does not succumb to the forces that would keep her and her family in bondage, but courageously upholds her right to freedom using the ideals that her master and other law abiding citizens of Massachusetts fashioned in their state constitution. Freedom becomes a reality for her family, and opens the long road toward the abolition of slavery everywhere.

## SERIES AWARD WINNER

### DEAR AMERICA SERIES

Scholastic, 1996

Three well-known authors inaugurate the Dear America Series

Each book is presented as a girl's diary which records in detail the daily events of a historical period. The books include account of real life, hardship, and sadness. Epilogues bring the books to satisfying conclusions. Historical notes are places at the end of each book as well as other published information. The notes do not detract from the realistic mood created in the diaries.

### 1996 Titles Include:

**A Journey to the New World, The Diary of Remember Patience Whipple, Mayflower, 1620** by Kathryn Lasky. Scholastic, 1996. Grades 5-8

**The Winter of Red Snow: The Revolutionary War Diary of Abigail Jane Stewart, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, 1777** by Kristiana Gregory. Scholastic 1996 Grades 5-8

**When Will This Cruel War Be Over? The Civil War Diary of Emma Simpson, Gordonsville, Virginia, 1864** by Barry Denenberg. Scholastic, 1996. Grades 5-8

## Previous Jefferson Cup Award Winners

1996	The Great Fire by Jim Murphy
1995	Pink And Say, by Patricia Polacco
1994	Across America on An Emigrant Train by Jim Murphy
1993	Children of the Dust Bowl by Jerry Stanley
1992	The Wright Brothers by Russell Freedman
1991	Franklin Delano Roosevelt by Russell Freeman
1990	Shades of Gray by Carolyn Reeder
1989	Anthony Burnes: The Defeat And Triumph Of A Fugitive Slave by Virginia Hamilton
1988	Lincoln: A Photobiography by Russell Freedman
1987	After the Dancing Days by Margaret Rostkowski
1986	Sarah, Plain And Tall by Patricia MacLachlan
1985	In The Year Of The Boar And Jackie Robinson by Bette Bao Lord
1984	Who Speaks For Wolf? by Paula Underwood Spencer
1983	The Jewish Americans: A History In Their Own Words by Milton Meltzer

For information about the award or to submit a nomination, please contact:

Jean Johnston  
Chair, 1998 Jefferson Cup Award Committee  
2024 Adam Hill Rd.  
Vienna, VA 22182

Children's And Young Adults' Round Table of the Virginia Library Association

## JEFFERSON CUP AWARD

### Purpose:

*The Jefferson Cup honors a distinguished biography, historical fiction, or American history book for young people. The Virginia Library Association's Children's and Young Adult Round Table (CYART) has presented the award annually since 1983. Through the award, CYART seeks to promote reading about America's past; to encourage writing of U.S. history, biography and historical fiction for young people; and to recognize authors in these disciplines.*

### Eligibility:

1. The book must be an original work published in the year prior to the selection.
2. The book must be about U.S. history or an American person, 1492 to present, or fiction that highlights the U.S. past.
3. Author must reside in the U.S.
4. The book must be published especially for young people.
5. The book must be accurate, informative, well researched, unbiased, literate, and give a clear and interesting picture of America's past.

### Selection:

The Jefferson Cup Committee selects the winning book. The committee has eight members: a chairperson, selected by the previous year's committee; six individuals from throughout the state, selected by the current chair; and the outgoing chairperson of CYART.

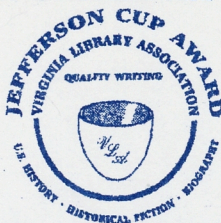
## 1997 Jefferson Cup Award Committee

Rachael DeHaven, Chair  
June Pike, Region 1  
Karen Barley, Region 2  
Marjorie Zerbian, Region 3

Kay Remick, Region 4  
Jean Johnston, Region 5  
Elizabeth Locher, Region 6  
Anne Lund, ex-officio



# **VIRGINIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION**



## **JEFFERSON CUP AWARD WINNERS**

- 1997 - THE ORNAMENT TREE** by  
Jean Thesman
- 1996 - THE GREAT FIRE** by Jim  
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- 1995 - PINK AND SAY** by Patricia  
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- 1994 - ACROSS AMERICA ON AN  
EMIGRANT TRAIN** by Jim  
Murphy
- 1993 - CHILDREN OF THE DUST  
BOWL** by Jerry Stanley
- 1992 - THE WRIGHT BROTHERS**  
by Russell Freedman
- 1991 - FRANKLIN DELANO  
ROOSEVELT** by Russell  
Freedman
- 1990 - SHADES OF GRAY** by  
Carolyn Reader
- 1989 - ANTHONY BURNES : THE  
DEFEAT AND TRIUMPH OF  
A FUGITIVE SLAVE** by  
Virginia Hamilton
- 1988 - LINCOLN:  
PHOTOBIOGRAPHY** by  
Russell Freedman
- 1987 - AFTER THE DANCING DAYS**  
by Margaret Rostkowski
- 1986 - SARAH, PLAIN AND TALL**  
by Patricai MacLachlan
- 1985 - IN THE YEAR OF THE  
BOAR AND JACKIE  
ROBINSON** by Bette  
Bao Lord
- 1984 - WHO SPEAKS FOR WOLF?**  
by Paula Underwood Spencer
- 1983 - THE JEWISH AMERICANS:  
HISTORY IN THEIR OWN  
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Karen Barley, Region 2  
Marjorie Zerbian, Region 3  
Kay Remick, Region 4  
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Elizabeth Locher, Region 6