

2007 Jefferson Cup

AWARD

U.S. HISTORY
HISTORICAL FICTION
BIOGRAPHY



*Presented by
Youth Services Forum
of the Virginia Library Association*

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U.S. HISTORY • HISTORICAL FICTION • BIOGRAPHY

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Blood on the River: James Town 1607

By Elisa Carbone • Viking Publishing • Grades 6-9

Sometime before the Christian year 1607, Chief Powhatan receives a prophecy from his trusted priests. It tells of a tribe coming from the bay of the Chesapeake who will rise up against the Powhatans and in the end the Powhatan kingdom will be no more. And so the story of *Blood on the River* begins.

In 1606, in London, England, the prophecy is beginning to come true. King James has granted a charter to send men in search of gold, silver and jewels, to find a new passage to the Orient and to cut down and ship back New World trees to build English houses.

Elisa Carbone's vivid account of four treacherous months at sea and the challenges of establishing the James Town settlement are depicted through the eyes of eleven-year-old orphan Samuel Collier. Chosen to serve as Captain John Smith's page on the voyage, he relates the sights they encounter, the smells of stale air of the 'tween deck, and even the taste of the fetid water. After arriving in Virginia, he reveals the challenges of establishing a settlement in rich description and endless adventure.

Samuel's relationship with Captain Smith evolves from one of fear and mistrust to one of respect and confidence as Captain Smith teaches him about focusing his anger and the importance of working together and learning how to understand and interact with the Native Americans if the settlement is to succeed. Smith's common sense approach to building a colony, establishing protection, and storing food for the coming winter wins Samuel's loyalty. In contrast, daily clashes with the "gentlemen" who are not nearly as worried about food and shelter as they are about finding gold in Virginia, foreshadow much of the impending struggles among the settlers.

Carbone's use of original journal entries and other primary sources to begin each chapter reinforces the reality of incidents in her story. Pocahontas is portrayed as the young child who was fascinated by Smith, but not in love. Samuel Collier was in fact Captain Smith's page who spent a year in the Warraskoyack village and learned many of the natives' ways. Her account of the first settlement explains so much of what has been ignored about the realities of James Town. This novel presents an evenhanded chronicle of our beginnings as our nation celebrates the quadricentennial of America's first settlement.

HONOR BOOKS

Dark Water Rising

By Marian Hale • Henry Holt and Company • Grades 6-9

A coming-of-age tale and the events of the devastating 1900 Galveston hurricane combine to make this historical novel a powerful read. Sixteen-year-old Seth is a recent transplant to vibrant Galveston, Texas, and harbors hope that his dream of becoming a carpenter will be realized in this boomtown. But his ambition conflicts with his father's vision of a college education for his son. An immediate opportunity to work with a builder launches Seth into the thriving construction business, and he begins to develop relationships with other young people. A friendship with an African-American boy provides a window into race relations at the time, and a budding romantic interest in a neighbor girl gives the plot additional interest.

The story is expertly paced with a masterful building of dramatic tension. Well-chosen details foreshadow the events, and historical elements are seamlessly woven into the plot. The account of the storm transports the reader into a desperate scene with the characters clinging to life in a house battered by storm surge. Descriptions of the hurricane's fury, along with grim details of its aftermath, join to make the novel a page-turner that will resonate with all readers.

The story provides a compelling parallel to the events of Hurricane Katrina as the characters struggle to restore their shattered lives. This hard-to-put-down work concludes with photographs and source notes which impress the reader with the scope of this American disaster.

5,000 Miles to Freedom: Ellen and William Craft's Flight from Slavery

*By Judith Bloom Fradin and Dennis Brindell Fradin
National Geographic Society • Grades 5-9*

In December, 1848, an ailing white Southern gentleman and his slave boarded a train in Macon, Georgia, headed for Philadelphia. In reality, the Southern gentleman was neither ailing, white nor a man. He was a healthy, black, female slave. So begins the journey of William and Ellen

The Jefferson Cup Award

honors a distinguished American biography, historical fiction or history book for young people. The Youth Services Forum of the Virginia Library Association has presented this award annually since the 1982 publishing year. Through the award, the Youth Services Forum seeks to promote reading about America's past, to encourage the quality writing of United States history, biography and historical fiction for young people, and to recognize authors in these disciplines.

Craft, two slaves attempting to flee to freedom in disguise. William could naturally play his role as a slave, but the risk light-skinned Ellen was taking by impersonating a white man threatened severe consequences for both of them: separation, torture, even death.

Although the fugitives reached Philadelphia safely, their success sparked such enthusiasm among abolitionists that their fame provoked further threats to their security. It became necessary for them to escape to Boston, then through Canada to England where they continued to relate their story to huge audiences. Although prejudice and the Fugitive Slave Act complicated their freedom, the Crafts persevered and were rewarded with the privilege of raising a family of children who were not owned by any master.

5,000 Miles to Freedom is the dramatic narrative of their journey and the transformation of their lives. The Fradins excel in building tension using authentic dialogue, details and emotions as described in the Crafts' personal account, *Running a Thousand Miles to Freedom*. Supporting documents, including books, newspapers, diaries and letters, are listed at the end of the book. Nearly every page spread is illustrated with photos, drawings, maps and significant documents that enhance this remarkable story. The personalization of what freedom means to individuals is always a significant reminder of the cost of what we enjoy and what others still live without. The story of the Crafts' successful escape from and their life outside slavery is both sobering and triumphant.

Worthy of Note

The 9/11 Report: a Graphic Adaptation

By Sid Jacobson and Ernie Colon
Hill and Wang/Farrar, Straus and Giroux
Grades 8-12+

The 9/11 Report: a Graphic Adaptation condenses the 9/11 Commission's 585 page document into 133 pages packed with colorful detail. The creators use the power of the graphic format to tell the story of that fateful day and the years preceding and to examine how we can learn from what happened. Against the stark black background, the parallel timelines clarify the day's events in an unforgettable manner and leave no doubt as to what happened to the four hijacked planes and when.

The condensation of the text is faithful to the original report's goal. The chairs of the Commission endorse this version in the foreword, and hope it leads the American people to "read, reflect—and act." Mature readers will appreciate this valuable addition to the national conversation surrounding 9/11.

Series Worthy of Note

National Geographic Photobiography Series

Published by the National Geographic Society • Grades 5-8

Beautifully presented and expertly documented, this series of photobiographies should not be missed by school or public libraries. Inspiring and influential people from history, such as astronaut John Glenn and polar explorer Matthew Henson are brought to life through exciting photographs and fascinating text.

The bold covers on these books are hard to overlook. Amazing historical photographs are well placed throughout the series and add to the excitement of the text. The photographs highlight the pivotal moments in the lives of these icons, but the social climate of the time is also captured to bring more meaning to the reader. This series has carefully chosen individuals to inspire young readers. For example, *Onward*, about the African-American explorer Matthew Henson, describes not only his incredible achievements but inspires the reader by his determination despite the racism he endured. *Liftoff*, the story of John Glenn, illustrates the achievements we have all come to know and admire but goes on to focus on Glenn's role as a statesman and his challenge to inspire people "to a purpose larger than themselves."

This series includes clear chronologies, bibliographies, resources and indexes to assist students. Some of the series include web sites, places to visit and media resources as well. Children and adults will enjoy reading this stunning series.

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

Audrey Mitchell, 2008 Chair

Library Media Specialist
Hamilton-Holmes Middle School
18888 King William Road
King William, VA 23086
audreyribble@hotmail.com

Eligibility

- The book must be an original work published in the year prior to the selection.
- The book must be about U.S. history, an American person, or fiction that highlights the United States' past, 1492 to the present.
- The author must reside in the United States.
- The book must be published for young people.
- 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 nine members: a chairperson selected by the previous year's committee, six individuals representing the six regions in the state, the outgoing chairperson of the Youth Services Forum, and the outgoing Jefferson Cup Award Committee chairperson.

2007 Jefferson Cup Award Committee

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