

YA Genre Study, Historical Fiction

Benchmark Title:

Wein, Elizabeth. Code Name Verity. In 1943, a British fighter plane crashes in Nazi-occupied France and survivor tells a tale of friendship, war, espionage and great courage as she recounts what she must do to survive while she keeps all the secrets she can.

Secondary Titles:

Anderson Laurie Halse. Fever, 1793. In 1793 Philadelphia, sixteen year old Matilda Cook, separated from her sick mother, learns about perseverance and self-reliance when she is forced to cope with the horrors of a yellow fever epidemic.

Armstrong, Jennifer. Steal Away. In 1855, two thirteen year old girls, one white and one black, run away from a southern farm and make the difficult journey north to freedom, living to recount their story forty-one years later to two similar young girls.

Barrett, Tracy. Anna of Byzantium. In the eleventh century the teenage princess Anna Comnena fights for her birthright, the throne to the Byzantine Empire, which she fears will be taken from her by her younger brother John because he is a boy.

Blackwood, Gary L. The Year of the Hangman. In 1777, having been kidnapped and taken forcibly from England to the American colonies, fifteen year old Creighton becomes part of developments in the political unrest there that may spell defeat for the patriots and change the course of history.

Breslin, Theresa. Remembrance. The destinies of two Scottish families, one of shopkeepers and one of wealth and power, become entwined through their involvement in World War I, social causes and love.

Bruchac, Joseph. The Winter People. As the French and Indian War rages in October of 1759, Saxso, a fourteen year old Abenaki boy, pursues the English rangers who have attacked his village and taken his mother and sisters hostage.

Cushman, Karen. Catherine, Called Birdy. The thirteen year old daughter of an English country knight keeps a journal in which she records the events of her life, particularly her longing for adventures beyond the usual role of woman and her efforts to avoid being married off.

Kirkpatrick, Katherine. The Voyage of the Continental. In 1866, young orphan Emeline McCullough leaves her mill job in Lowell, Mass., to head for Seattle, Wash., aboard the steamship Continental, writing in her diary about the intrigue, danger and romance she encounters on her journey.

Lasky, Kathryn. Beyond the Divide. In 1849, a fourteen year old Amish girl defies convention by leaving her secure home in Pennsylvania to accompany her father across the continent by wagon train.

Meyer, Carolyn. Doomed Queen Anne. In 1520, thirteen year old Anne Boleyn, jealous of her older sister's beauty and position at court, declares that she will one day be queen of England, and that her sister will kneel at her feet.

Myers, Anna. Assassin. In alternating passages, a young White House seamstress named Bella and the actor John Wilkes Booth describe the events that lead to the latter's assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

Paulsen, Gary. The Car. A teenager left on his own travels west in a kit car he built himself and along the way picks up two Vietnam veterans, who take him on an eye-opening journey.

Peck, Richard. The River Between Us. During the early days of the Civil War, the Pruitt family takes in two mysterious young ladies who have fled New Orleans to come north to Illinois.

Rinaldi, Ann. A Break With Charity. While waiting for a church meeting in 1706, Susanna English, daughter of a wealthy Salem merchant, recalls the malice, fear and accusations of witchcraft that tore her village apart in 1692.

Rinaldi, Ann. Hang a Thousand Trees with Ribbons. A fictionalized biography of an 18th Century African woman who, as a child, was brought to New England to be a slave, and after publishing her first poem when a teenager, gained renown throughout the colonies as an important black American poet.

Sepetys, Ruta. Out of the Easy. Josie, seventeen year old daughter of a French Quarter prostitute, is striving to escape 1950s New Orleans and enroll at prestigious Smith College, when she becomes involved in a murder investigation.

Weaver, Will. Full Service. In the summer of 1965, teenager Paul Sutton, a northern Minnesota farm boy, takes a job at a gas station in town, where his strict religious upbringing is challenged by new people and experiences.

Zusak, Markus. The Book Thief. Trying to make sense of the horrors of World War II, Death relates the story of Liesl, a young German girl whose book-stealing and story-telling talents help sustain her family and the Jewish man they are hiding, as well as their neighbors.