

Historical Fiction for Middle School Students

(YA=Young Adult)

(YPL=Children's)

Useful web site

<http://www.webrary.org/rs/bibhistfict.html>

Some recommended authors of historical fiction:

Avi
James Collier
Karen Cushman
Christopher Paul Curtis
Karen Hesse
Irene Hunt
Iain Lawrence
Scott O'Dell
Katherine Paterson
Richard Peck
Ann Rinaldi
Pam Munoz Ryan
Gary Soto
Elizabeth George Speare
Mildred Taylor
Yoko Watkins
Gloria Whelan
Ellen Emerson White

Across Five Aprils by Irene Hunt (YPL)

The story of a young boy, his family, and his neighbors who live in a backwoods Illinois community during the Civil War period.

Amelia's War by Ann Rinaldi (YA)

When a Confederate general threatens to burn Hagerstown, Maryland, unless it pays an exorbitant ransom, twelve-year-old Amelia and her friend find a way to save the town.

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An Acquaintance with Darkness by Ann Rinaldi (YA)

When her mother dies and her best friend's family is implicated in the assassination of President Lincoln, fourteen-year-old Emily Pigbush must go live with an uncle she suspects of being involved in stealing bodies for medical research.

B For Buster by Iain Lawrence (YA)

In the spring of 1943, sixteen-year-old Kak, desperate to escape his abusive parents, lies about his age to enlist in the Canadian Air Force and soon finds himself based in England as part of a crew flying bombing raids over Germany.

Bronze Bow by Elizabeth George Speare (YA & YPL)

When the Romans brutally kill Daniel bar Jamin's father, the young Palestinian searches for a leader to drive them out, but comes to realize that love may be a more powerful weapon than hate.

Bull Run by Paul Fleischman (YA & YPL)

Northerners, Southerners, generals, couriers, dreaming boys, and worried sisters describe the glory, the horror, the thrill, and the disillusionment of the first battle of the Civil War.

Bud, Not Buddy by Christopher Paul Curtis (YA & YPL)

Ten-year-old Bud, a motherless boy living in Flint, Michigan, during the Great Depression, escapes a bad foster home and sets out in search of the man he believes to be his father--the renowned bandleader, H.E. Calloway of Grand Rapids.

Buried Onions by Gary Soto (YA)

When nineteen-year-old Eddie drops out of college, he struggles to find a place for himself as a Mexican American living in a violence-infested neighborhood of Fresno, California.

Burying the Sun by Gloria Whelan

In Leningrad in 1941, when Russia and Germany are at war, fourteen-year-old Georgi vows to help his family and his city during the terrible siege.

The Captive by Scott O'Dell (YA)

As part of a Spanish expedition to the New World, a Jesuit seminarian witnesses the enslavement and exploitation of the Mayas and his own seduction by greed and ambition.

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Catherine, Called Birdy by Karen Cushman (YA & YPL)

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 women and her efforts to avoid being married off.

The Contender by Robert Lipsyte (YA)

A Harlem high school dropout escapes from a gang of punks into a boxing gym, where he learns that being a contender is hard and often discouraging work, but that you don't know anything until you try.

The Convicts by Iain Lawrence (YA)

His efforts to avenge his father's unjust imprisonment force fourteen-year-old Tom Tin into the streets of nineteenth-century London, but after he is convicted of murder, Tom is eventually sent to Australia where he has a surprise reunion.

Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan (YA)

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labor camps of Southern California, where they must adapt to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression.

Fallen Angels by Walter Dean Myers (YA)

Seventeen-year-old Richie Perry, just out of his Harlem high school, enlists in the Army in the summer of 1967 and spends a devastating year on active duty in Vietnam.

Fever, 1793 by Laurie Halse Anderson (YA)

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.

Friedrich by Hans Peter Richter (YA & YPL)

A young German boy recounts the fate of his best friend, a Jew, during the Nazi regime.

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Girl in Blue by Ann Rinaldi (YA)

To escape an abusive father and an arranged marriage, fourteen-year-old Sarah, dressed as a boy, leaves her Michigan home to enlist in the Union Army, and becomes a soldier on the battlefields of Virginia as well as a Union spy working in the house of Confederate sympathizer Rose O'Neal Greenhow in Washington, D.C.

Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell (YA & YPL)

Left alone on a beautiful but isolated island off the coast of California, a young Indian girl spends eighteen years, not only merely surviving through her enormous courage and self-reliance, but also finding a measure of happiness in her solitary life.

Jacob, Have I Loved by Katherine Paterson (YA & YPL)

Having felt deprived all her life of schooling, friends, mother, and even her name by her twin sister, Louise finally begins to find her identity.

The Journal of Patrick Seamus Flaherty, United States Marine Corps by Ellen Emerson White

An eighteen-year-old Marine records in his journal his experiences in Vietnam during the siege of Khe Sanh, 1967-1968. Includes a history of Vietnam, war timeline, glossary, and related military information.

Dear America Series

Letters from Rifka by Karen Hesse (YA & YPL)

In letters to her cousin, a young Jewish girl chronicles her family's flight from Russia in 1919 and her own experiences when she must be left in Belgium for a while when the others emigrate to America.

A Light in the Storm: The Civil War Diary of Amelia Martin by Karen Hesse (YA & YPL)

In 1860 and 1861, while working in her father's lighthouse on an island off the coast of Delaware, fifteen-year-old Amelia records in her diary how the Civil War is beginning to devastate her divided state.

Dear America Series

A Long Way from Chicago by Richard Peck (YA & YPL)

A boy recounts his annual summer trips to rural Illinois with his sister during the Great Depression to visit their larger-than-life grandmother.

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Lyddie by Katherine Paterson (YA & YPL)

Impoverished Vermont farm girl Lyddie Worthen is determined to gain her independence by becoming a factory worker in Lowell, Massachusetts, in the 1840s.

The Midwife's Apprentice by Karen Cushman (YA & YPL)

In medieval England, a nameless, homeless girl is taken in by a sharp-tempered midwife, and in spite of obstacles and hardship, eventually gains the three things she most wants: a full belly, a contented heart, and a place in this world.

My brother, my sister, and I by Yoko Kawashima Watkins

Living as refugees in Japan in 1947 while trying to locate their missing father, thirteen-year-old Yoko and her older brother and sister must endure a bad fire, injury, and false charges of arson, theft, and murder.

My Brother Sam is Dead by James Collier (YA & YPL)

Recounts the tragedy that strikes the Meeker family during the Revolution when one son joins the rebel forces while the rest of the family tries to stay neutral in a Tory town.

A Night to Remember by Walter Lord (YA)

From the first distress flares to the struggles of those left adrift for hours in freezing waters, here is the legendary disaster relived by the few who survived and can never forget the many who did not.

NightJohn by Gary Paulsen (YA & YPL)

Twelve-year-old Sarny's brutal life as a slave becomes even more dangerous when a newly arrived slave offers to teach her how to read.

Nory Ryan's Song by Patricia Reilly Giff (YPL)

When a terrible blight attacks Ireland's potato crop in 1845, twelve-year-old Nory Ryan's courage and ingenuity help her family and neighbors survive.

Number the Stars by Lois Lowry (YA & YPL)

In 1943, during the German occupation of Denmark, ten-year-old Annemarie learns how to be brave and courageous when she helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis.

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton (YA)

The struggle of three brothers to stay together after their parent's death and their quest for identity among the conflicting values of their adolescent society.

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Rodzina by Karen Cushman (YPL)

A twelve-year-old Polish American girl is boarded onto an orphan train in Chicago with fears about traveling to the West and a life of unpaid slavery.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor (YA & YPL)

A black family living in the South during the 1930s is faced with prejudice and discrimination which its children do not understand.

Ruby in the Smoke by Phillip Pullman (YA)

In nineteenth-century London, sixteen-year-old Sally, a recent orphan, becomes involved in a deadly search for a mysterious ruby.

Sarny, a Life Remembered by Gary Paulsen (YA)

Continues the adventures of Sarny, the slave girl Nightjohn taught to read, through the aftermath of the Civil War during which time she taught other Blacks and lived a full life until age ninety-four.

Search of the Moon King's Daughter : a novel by Linda Holeman (YA)

Gentle Emmaline loves nothing more than books and flowers and her little brother Tommy. When her idyllic country life in Victorian England is shattered when her father dies and her recently injured and drug addicted mother sells Tommy into servitude, Emmaline knows that she must find him if he is to survive.

So Far From the Bamboo Grove by Yoko Kawashima Watkins (YA & YPL)

A fictionalized autobiography in which eleven-year-old Yoko escapes from Korea to Japan with her mother and sister at the end of World War II.

Soldier's heart : a novel of the Civil War by Gary Paulsen (YA & YPL)

Eager to enlist, fifteen-year-old Charley has a change of heart after experiencing both the physical horrors and mental anguish of Civil War combat.

SOS Titanic by Eve Bunting (YA & YPL)

Fifteen-year-old Barry O'Neill, traveling from Ireland to America on the maiden voyage of the Titanic, finds his life endangered when the ship hits an iceberg and begins to sink.

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Stowaway by Karen Hesse (YA & YPL)

A fictionalized journal relates the experiences of a young stowaway from 1768 to 1771 aboard the Endeavor which sailed around the world under Captain James Cook.

Summer of My German Soldier by Bette Greene (YA & YPL)

Sheltering an escaped German prisoner of war is the beginning of some shattering experiences for a 12-year-old Jewish girl in Arkansas.

True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle by Avi (YA & YPL)

As the lone "young lady" on a transatlantic voyage in 1832, Charlotte learns that the captain is murderous and the crew rebellious.

Truth About Sparrows by Marian Hale (YPL)

Twelve-year-old Sadie promises that she will always be Wilma's best friend when their families leaves drought-stricken Missouri in 1933, but once in Texas, Sadie learns that she must try to make a new home--and new friends, too.

Under a Blood-Red Sun by Graham Salisbury (YA & YPL)

Tomikazu Nakaji's biggest concerns are baseball, homework, and a local bully, until life with his Japanese family in Hawaii changes drastically after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

Witch of Blackbird Pond by Elizabeth George Speare (YA & YPL)

1687 in Connecticut, Kit Tyler, feeling out of place in the Puritan household of her aunt, befriends an old woman considered a witch by the community and suddenly finds herself standing trial for witchcraft.

Witness by Karen Hesse (YA & YPL)

A series of poems express the views of various people in a small Vermont town, including a young black girl and a young Jewish girl, during the early 1920s when the Ku Klux Klan is trying to infiltrate the town.

Year Down Yonder by Richard Peck (YA & YPL)

During the recession of 1937, fifteen-year-old Mary Alice is sent to live with her feisty, larger-than-life grandmother in rural Illinois and comes to a better understanding of this fearsome woman.

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