

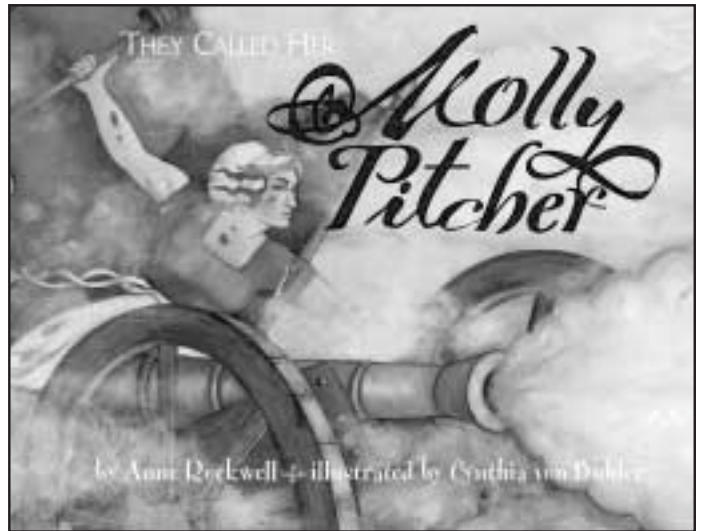
BOOKNOTES

TEACHERS GUIDE

thematic connections

Freedom • Leadership
Bravery • Fear • Heroism

Grades 2–5



Alfred A. Knopf hardcover • 0-679-89187-0

about the book

This easy-to-read picture book biography tells the story of Molly Hays, the woman who became known as Molly Pitcher because she carried water to thirsty soldiers during the American Revolution.

William Hays joined General George Washington's soldiers at Valley Forge in 1777. His wife, Molly, followed him to cook, wash clothing, and care for the sick. When news came in the spring of 1778 that the British were waging a battle at Monmouth Courthouse, General Washington's soldiers marched toward the colony of New Jersey, and Molly Hays marched with them. While the British had trouble with the heat, the American soldiers survived because Molly Hays brought them cool spring water in a dented pewter pitcher that she had packed with her few possessions. As the battle heightened, Molly could hear the urgent cries of "Molly—Pitcher!" During one of her trips, she saw her husband wounded and unable to fire his cannon. Molly, now affectionately known as Molly Pitcher, fired the cannon herself, which earned her title of sergeant in the Continental Army.

"She was blurred by the smoke that surrounded her. Her face was smudged with gunpowder and sweat. But George Washington saw her take a deep breath, then run and shove the long ramrod into the big gun with as much force as possible. The cannon boomed."

—from *They Called Her Molly Pitcher*

pre-reading activity

Ask students to draw a picture of a Fourth of July celebration. Display the pictures and ask each artist to explain their work. Then engage the class in a discussion about the reasons we celebrate July 4th. Review the time line in the back of the book and help students focus on the events that led to our nation's freedom. Why is it important for us to continue to celebrate our freedom?



thematic

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

FREEDOM—Discuss the meaning of freedom. What does it mean to be a “free and independent nation”? William Hays felt that England was denying the colonists citizens’ rights. What kind of rights were they being denied? What are some of the citizens’ rights that we enjoy in our nation today?

LEADERSHIP—Ask the class to discuss the qualities of a leader. Describe George Washington as a leader. Why did the British call him “that wily old fox”? Contrast Washington’s skills as a leader with Friedrich Wilhelm Augustus von Steuben’s leadership style. The American soldiers almost fell apart at the battle of Monmouth Courthouse under the leadership of General Lee. Discuss how Washington restored leadership when he arrived at the scene.

BRAVERY—George Washington recognized Molly’s bravery and gave her the rank of sergeant in the Continental Army. Ask students to discuss Molly’s greatest moment of bravery. Which illustration in the book best signifies her bravery?

FEAR—Discuss the fears that led the American colonists to war. How is fear related to courage? How did fear almost overtake the American soldiers at Monmouth Courthouse? Discuss how Molly’s courage might have given the American soldiers hope and encouragement.

HEROISM—Ask students to discuss the qualities of a hero. Molly Pitcher was a hero to the soldiers at Monmouth Courthouse. Discuss how she might have gotten a different reaction from the women in her hometown of Carlisle, Pennsylvania. There is a monument to Molly at her burial site in Carlisle. What might be a fitting inscription on that monument?



connecting to the

LANGUAGE ARTS—Friedrich Wilhelm Augustus von Steuben claimed that he could turn Washington’s army into a “fine fighting force.” And he could do it without speaking English. Discuss different ways to communicate. Divide the class into small groups and ask them to plan a task to teach to the class without speaking. After each group teaches their task, discuss the various methods of communication used by the groups.

Today, the media can turn a person into a hero by the means in which they report the news. Write a news story about Molly Pitcher in a style that it would be reported in today. Discuss how it would be difficult for her to return to a “normal” life in today’s society.

SCIENCE—Fifty-six British soldiers died of heatstroke in one day at the Battle of Monmouth Courthouse. Ask students to research the symptoms of heatstroke, and how it can be treated. How were the British unprepared for the heat? Discuss how Washington’s soldiers avoided heatstroke.

SOCIAL STUDIES—There were other important people involved in the colonists’ fight for freedom. Refer students to the Web site www.ushistory.org/valleyforge. Ask them to pick a person like General Henry Knox, Aaron Burr, Jacob Latch, James Monroe, or General Anthony Wayne and prepare a brief oral report of the person’s contribution during the American Revolution.

DRAMA—Ask your students how they think Molly Pitcher felt when General George Washington named her a sergeant of the Continental Army. Have the class dramatize a ceremony that General George Washington might have conducted to bestow this honor upon her.



ART—Explain to students the connection between story and illustration. What is the significance of the artwork on the end pages and title page? What do the colors symbolize? Send students to the library to find pictures of people during colonial times. Then discuss the accuracy of the illustrations. Students may also enjoy writing a caption for each illustration in the book.

MUSIC—A ballad is a song that tells a story. Often ballads are written about legendary characters. Ask the music teacher or librarians to locate some ballads to share with the students. Then have students write a ballad about Molly Pitcher to a familiar tune.

vocabulary / use of language

Ask students to find unfamiliar words and try to define them from the context of the story. Such words may include *bedraggled*, *sentries*, *guerrilla warfare*, *deserted*, *massacre*, and *retreat*.

related titles

other picture book biographies

Joan of Arc

Josephine Poole

Illustrated by Angela Barrett

Grades 3–8 / 0-375-80355-6

Dell Dragonfly

**Only Passing Through:
The Story of Sojourner Truth**

Anne Rockwell

Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie

Grades 2–5 / 0-679-89186-2

Alfred A. Knopf

**The Prince Who Ran Away:
The Story of Gautama Buddha**

Anne Rockwell

Illustrated by Fahimeh Amiri

Grades 2–5 / 0-679-89188-9

Alfred A. Knopf

**Woody Guthrie:
Poet of the People**

Bonnie Christensen

All grades / 0-375-81113-3

Alfred A. Knopf

about the author

Anne Rockwell has been writing children's books for over thirty-five years. Most recently she's been combining her two loves, history and storytelling, in her well-received picture book biographies: *Only Passing Through: The Story of Sojourner Truth* and *The Prince Who Ran Away: The Story of Gautama Buddha*. Ms. Rockwell lives in Old Greenwich, Connecticut.

about the

Cynthia von Buhler resides and paints at Castle von Buhler in Boston. The seeds for her historically influenced style were first planted when she painted climbing vines on the Castle walls. She then went on to paint portraits for magazines, CD covers, and books. Ms. von Buhler recently illustrated a story by Martha Stewart for Steven Spielberg's anthology *Once upon a Fairy Tale*, which benefits the Starbright Foundation for seriously ill children.

internet resources

Historic Valley Forge

Provides a history of and a time line for Valley Forge.

www.ushistory.org/valleyforge/kids

American Patriots: Molly Pitcher

Features a painting of Molly Pitcher at the Battle of Monmouth Courthouse in 1778.

www.geocities.com/sunsetstrip/vine/9868/mpitcher.html

Monmouth Courthouse Battle Reenactment

Presents a reenactment of the Battle of Monmouth Courthouse.

www.state.nj.us/travel/virtual/monmouth/monmouth.html

Chronicle of the Revolution

Records the American Revolution and provides pertinent links.

www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/chronicle/index.html

on the web

For additional online resources, author bios, teachers guides, and more . . .

Visit our **FREE** online site
Teachers @ Random

Be sure to sign up for our online newsletter!

www.randomhouse.com/teachers