

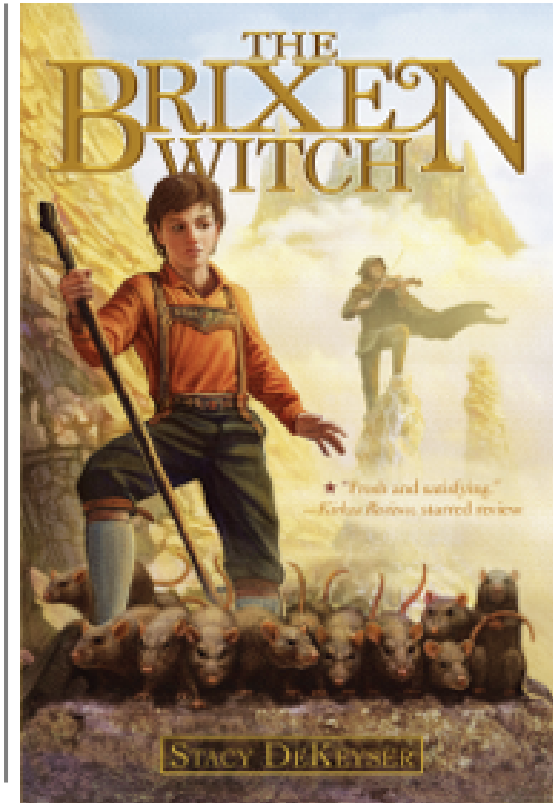
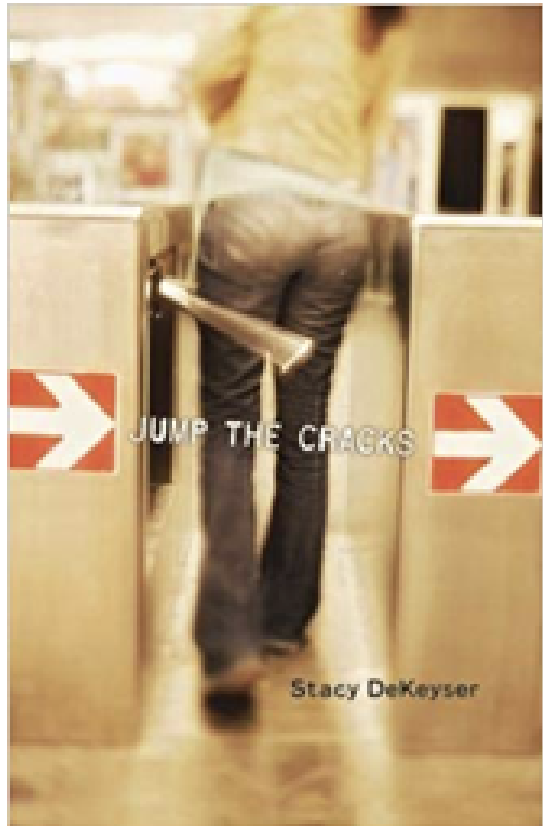
Stacy DeKeyser
Stacydekeyser.com

Historical Fiction: A Stepping Stone to Real History

Stacy DeKeyser
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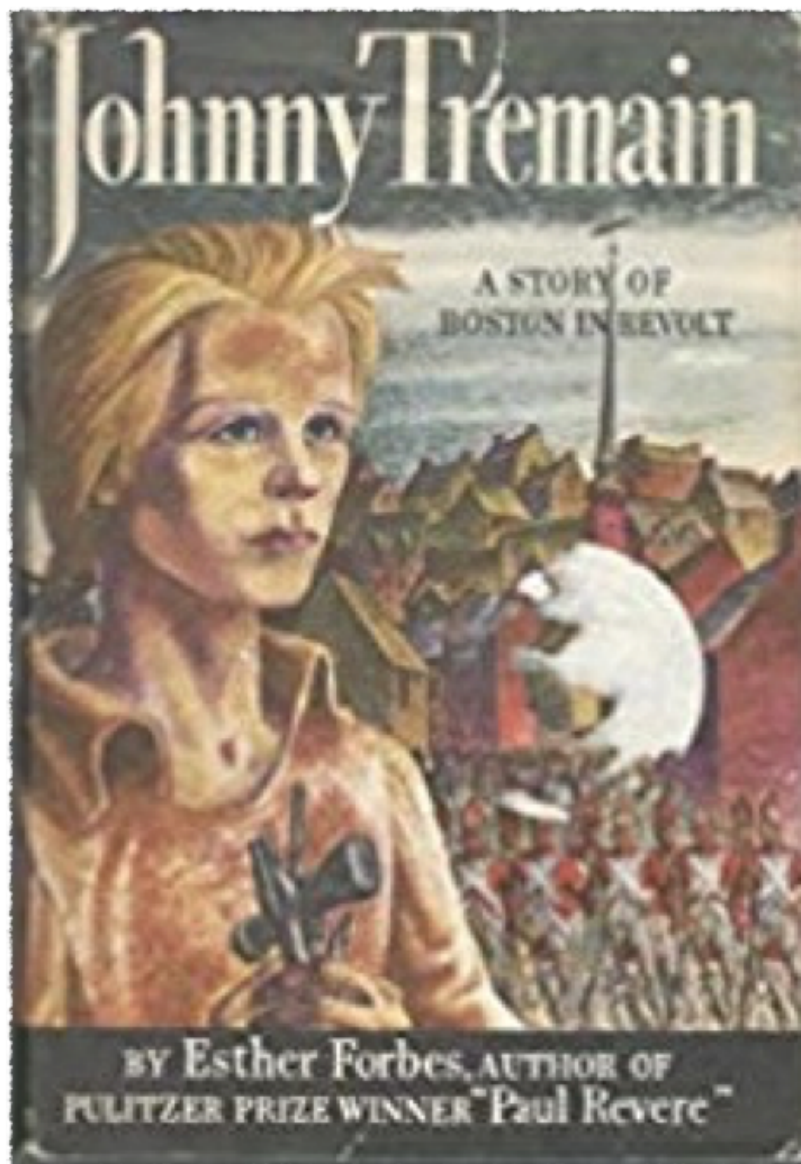
If you give a kid a
historical novel...

My books:



...she might
grow up to be
a novelist.

- Every writer was a reader first.
- There was probably a favorite historical novel in the author's childhood.



Johnny Tremain

A STORY OF
BOSTON IN REVOLT

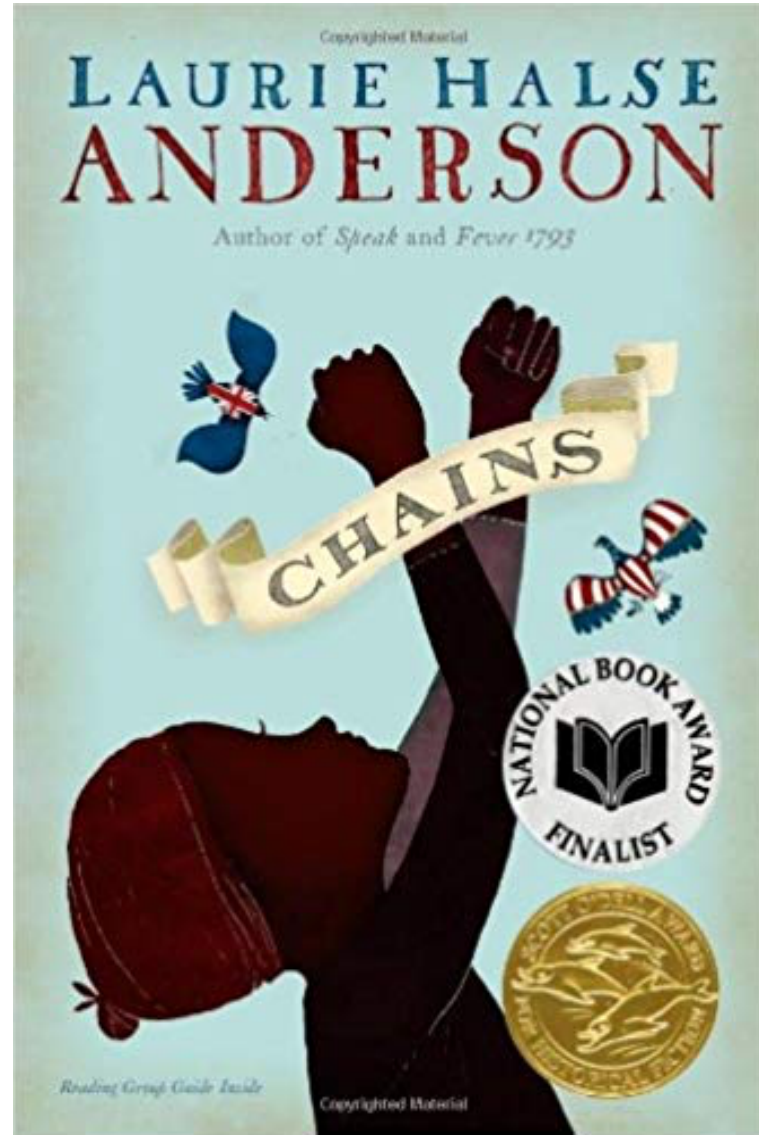
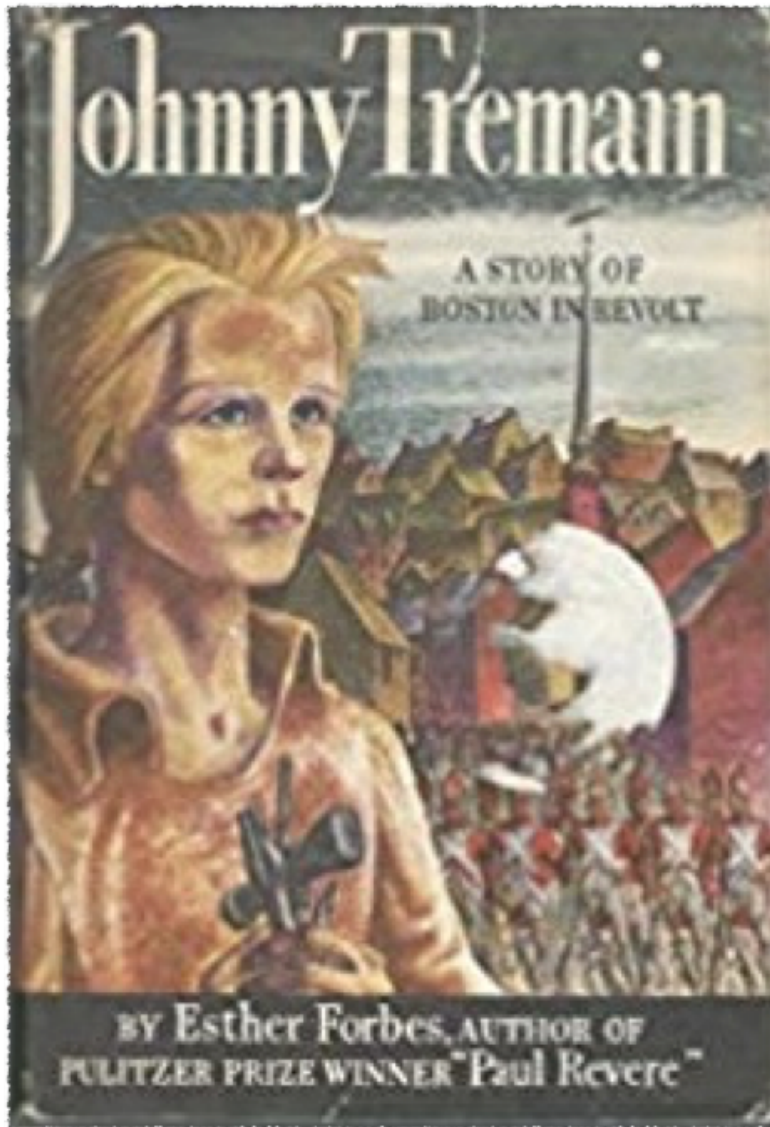
BY Esther Forbes, AUTHOR OF
PULITZER PRIZE WINNER "Paul Revere"

He might
become
curious about
REAL history.

- History doesn't happen only to "important" people.
- Imagine a 1000-piece jigsaw puzzle:
 - Each historical novel is a piece of the bigger puzzle.
 - It's not the whole story, but it helps complete the picture.

She might see
perspective
and context.

- Readers can see themselves in the characters: Fiction relates history as it affects “regular” people.
- A novel relates one individual’s experience within larger events.
- Different people=different experiences, even of the same events. (More pieces of the puzzle.)



Wide reading creates a broader perspective.

He might
recognize
parallels and
gain empathy.

- What can young readers learn about themselves, and current events, from reading historical fiction?
 - Playing baseball
 - The immigrant experience
 - Hong Kong protests?

What do we have in common with people who lived in the past?

She might
learn to use
critical
thinking
skills.

- Learn to recognize the difference between fiction and facts.
- Fiction can inform and lend perspective, but it's still fiction.
- Apply this distinction to other disciplines:
 - Science
 - Social media?
- Evaluate what you read.

Postscript:
Every novel
is a
historical
novel

- Look beyond the label.
- Setting is time and place.
- Every story is frozen in time.
- Contemporary novels eventually become “historical”:
 - *The Outsiders*
 - *From the Mixed Up Files...*
 - *Jump the Cracks*

Resources

- “Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People”:

<https://www.cbcbooks.org/readers/reading-lists/best-of-lists/notable-social-studies/>

- The Children’s Book Committee of the Bank Street College of Education:

<https://www.bankstreet.edu/library/center-for-childrens-literature/childrens-book-committee/best-childrens-books-of-the-year/>

The End

stacy@stacydekeyser.com

