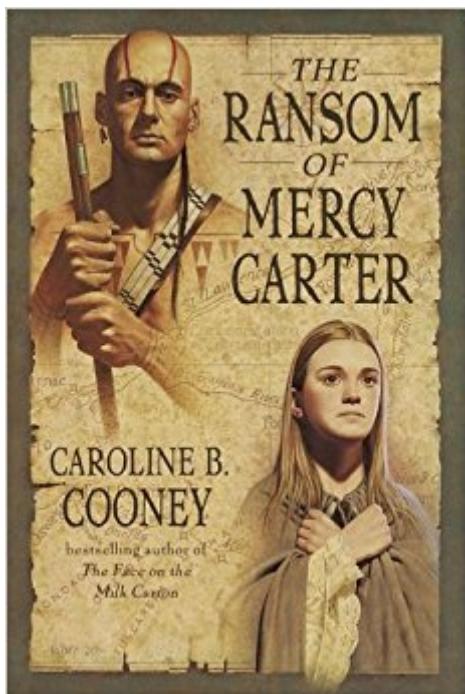


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# The Ransom Of Mercy Carter



## **Synopsis**

Deerfield, Massachusetts is one of the most remote, and therefore dangerous, settlements in the English colonies. In 1704 an Indian tribe attacks the town, and Mercy Carter becomes separated from the rest of her family, some of whom do not survive. Mercy and hundreds of other settlers are herded together and ordered by the Indians to start walking. The grueling journey -- three hundred miles north to a Kahnawake Indian village in Canada -- takes more than 40 days. At first Mercy's only hope is that the English government in Boston will send ransom for her and the other white settlers. But days turn into months and Mercy, who has become a Kahnawake daughter, thinks less and less of ransom, of Deerfield, and even of her "English" family. She slowly discovers that the "savages" have traditions and family life that soon become her own, and Mercy begins to wonder: If ransom comes, will she take it?

## **Book Information**

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Based on actual events, this latest offering from the accomplished Cooney (The Face on the Milk Carton; Driver's Ed) is a gripping and thought-provoking account of the 1704 Indian raid on the English settlement of Deerfield, Mass. After their village is burned and many of its residents killed, Mercy and more than 100 other settlers are taken prisoner by the Kahnawake Mohawk, who have

been converted to Catholicism by the French. Some of the novel's most riveting chapters describe the difficult winter trek that takes them 300 miles north to Canada, where Mercy settles into life in a traditional Indian village near Montreal. Uncertain whether she will be adopted by the Mohawk who captured her or whether the English will pay the ransom that would allow her to return to Massachusetts, Mercy struggles to balance loyalty to her own family and traditions with a growing appreciation for the Kahnawake way of life. Just how much her perspective broadens can be measured by the fact that, in addition to adopting many Indian ways, Mercy can find something sacred and comforting in the Catholic mass a rite she was raised to believe led straight to eternal damnation. Portrayed mostly as rigid, angry and dogmatic, the Puritans contrast poorly with the generally kind and commonsensical Indians, and Mercy's final choice is thus compelling. Though at times this account reads like the MTV version of the events (e.g., glancing over such important events as the death of Mercy's Indian father), the immediacy of Mercy's dilemma comes through despite its historical distance. Cooney's trademark staccato delivery keeps the pages turning. Ages 12-up. (Apr.) Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Gr 6-8-The drama of history unfolds in this gripping tale based on the actual destruction of Deerfield, MA, in February, 1704. In a surprise attack, Mohawk Indians entered the town, burned it, and took captives with them on a 300-mile march to Canada. This is 11-year-old Mercy Carter's story. Accustomed to caring for her younger siblings, she becomes the mother figure for several of the children on the long and harsh journey. Although she waits to be ransomed, when the opportunity arises more than a year after her capture, she refuses to go back. Cooney artfully combines the intense drama of the situation with historical details of the period and the Indian culture. The conflict between the English Puritans from Deerfield and the French Catholics is also well depicted. However, although Mercy is an intriguing, feisty girl, her maturity is often unrealistic. She never panics; she always thinks ahead and projects the outcome of her actions. Cooney carefully draws her other characters to show myriad reactions to the capture, including the rebellious Ruth and others who are too devastated by their losses to care about what happens to them. It is unfortunate that only cursory mention is made of the Indians' underlying plight against the invading white man that led to such horrifying attacks. Still, there is a great deal in this engrossing tale to recommend it. Renee Steinberg, Fieldstone Middle School, Montvale, NJCopyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Well written & I've read a lot of books about children captured by Native Americans since I was in

4th grade (many years ago). I recommend this book for adults even though it was written for older children, When I lived in Mass. from 1957 to 1966, I visited Old Deerfield Village a number of times. Having done so, helped me better visualize the Native American attack on the community is described. In addition, being familiar with the topography & the Berkshire Mountains gave be a better understanding of the forced journey the prisoners endured. How any of them survived is truly amazing; but, then, they did not live with central heating, etc. as we do today.

This is a young adult book that I read as a mentor for a group of young teenage girls. It is compelling in its complex yet clear examination of themes of family, loyalty, religion, duty, diversity of cultures, importance of the development of one's own identity; all told within a simple story and with very clear and compelling writing. The world a lot of teenagers live in today is very murky as to these themes and it is refreshing to find the themes clearly delineated and viewed in a world where things are very different from, yet much the same as, today's world. I wish all of today's teenagers had to read this book.

It was easy to get into this book because Mercy Carter was an ancestor of mine (her brother John Carter was my sixth great grandfather) because it was personal. This book seems perfectly suited to young female readers (ages 10-16)who would like to read about a girl their age caught in a traumatic and tragic situation. Very sensitive readers may not like the descriptions of the deaths of Mercy's stepmother and some of her siblings and would need guidance. However, they will admire Mercy's courage, her own sensitivity and her eventual independence. It seems the Native Americans are treated fairly in this account. It's a good read for parent and child as it sets the stage for discussion about the role of Indians in our early colonial history.

I recently discovered via Ancestry.com that Mercy Carter is, in fact, my 6th Great Grand Aunt, so was delighted to find this book about their experiences beginning on Feb. 29th, 1704. While this book is fiction, it is based on historic fact. I appreciate that Ms. Cooney tells what is fact, what is fiction at the end of the story. I've done research since this discovery and this is pretty much "spot on". The true horror of their experience is impossible to imagine, but the book tells the story in an age appropriate manner. I've purchased several copies to distribute among the family, as we are descendants of her brother John who is mentioned in the book. Any student of American history would certainly learn something of the dangers and struggles of our founding fathers.

The ransom of mercy carter is by far one of my favorite books. I am constantly rereading it along with others by Caroline like Wanted!, losing Christina series, freeze, etc.. It is an amazing read and one I'd read in one sitting. It's a great read for anyone who can! Children, preteens, adults; you'll love it.

This was a great book that really highlighted the cultural differences between the two main character groups and how Mercy overcame those differences. This book was a great read and I had trouble putting it down. Also, the description doesn't say this, but the characters in this book are based on the true experiences of real people, with different names of course.

Read it with my 10 year old granddaughter. We both loved it and it brought up many interesting conversations. What would she do in that situation? What was going to happen next? It was lots of fun.

Great book, good history and genealogy.

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