

Great California Fiction at the Pleasanton Public Library

Compiled by the Pleasanton Library Children's Staff



Books are shelved in **Children's Fiction** by author's last name and/or **Children's Paperbacks** by first letter of author's last name (unless otherwise noted).

Please ask at the Children's Desk if you need help.

California Historical Fiction

Al Capone Does My Shirts by Gennifer Choldenko
 Grades 5-8 (228 p) *Audiobook available*
Sequel: Al Capone Shines My Shoes
 A twelve-year-old boy named Moose moves to Alcatraz Island in 1935 when guards' families were housed there, and has to contend with his extraordinary new environment in addition to life with his autistic sister.



The Ballad of Lucy Whipple by Karen Cushman
 Grades 4-8 (195 p) *Audiobook available*
 Twelve-year-old California Morning Whipple moves with her widowed mother and younger siblings to a California gold-mining camp. Lucy dreams of returning to Massachusetts and loses herself in books when she's not helping her mother with the boarding house.

The Loud Silence of Francine Green by Karen Cushman
 Grades 6-9 (225 p) *Audiobook available*
 In 1949, thirteen-year-old Francine goes to Catholic school in Los Angeles where she becomes best friends with a girl who questions authority and is frequently punished by the nuns, causing Francine to question her own values.



The Journey of Ben Uchida: Citizen #13559, Mirror Lake Internment Camp by Barry Denenberg
 Grades 5-8 (156 p) *My Name is America series*
 Twelve-year-old Ben Uchida keeps a journal of his experiences as a prisoner in a Japanese internment camp in Mirror Lake, California, during World War II.

Earthquake: San Francisco, 1906 by Kathleen Duey and Karen Bale
 Grades 5-8 (174 p) *Survival! series*
 When two young strangers, Brendan O'Connor and Li Dai Yue, meet by chance on the day of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, they struggle to survive the terror of crumbling buildings, fire, looting and chaos.



Bandit's Moon by Sid Fleischman
 Grades 4-6 (136 p) *Audiobook available*
 Twelve-year-old Annyrose relates her adventures with Joaquín Murieta and his band of outlaws in the California gold-mining region during the mid-1800's.



By the Great Horn Spoon! by Sid Fleischman
 Grades 4-6 (193 p) *Audiobook available*
 Jack Flagg, an orphan, runs away from home accompanied by the butler, Praiseworthy, and becomes involved in the Gold Rush of 1849.

Walk Across the Sea by Susan Fletcher
 Grades 6-9 (214 p)
 In late nineteenth-century California, when Chinese immigrants are being driven out or even killed for fear they will take jobs from whites, fifteen-year-old Eliza Jane McCully defies the townspeople and her lighthouse-keeper father to help a Chinese boy who has been kind to her.



Earthquake at Dawn by Kristiana Gregory
 Grades 5-8 (192 p)
 A novelization of twenty-two-year-old photographer, Edith Irvine's experience in the aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, as seen through the eyes of fifteen-year-old Daisy, a fictitious traveling companion.

Seeds of Hope: The Goldrush Diary of Suzanna Fairchild by Kristiana Gregory
 Grades 5-8 (186 p) *Dear America series*
 A diary account of fourteen-year-old Susanna Fairchild's life in 1849. Her father succumbs to gold fever and abandons his plan of establishing a medical practice in Oregon after losing his wife and money on their steamboat journey from New York.

Into the Firestorm by Deborah Hopkins
 Grades 5-8 (200 p)
 Days after arriving in San Francisco from Texas, eleven-year-old orphan, Nicholas Dray, tries to help his new neighbors survive the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and the subsequent fires.



The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child by Francisco Jimenez
 Grades 5-9 (116 p) *Spanish Audiobook available*
Sequel: Breaking Through
 The independent, but intertwined, stories follow a migrant family through their circuit, from picking cotton and strawberries to topping carrots – and back again – over a number of years. As it moves from one labor camp to the next, the little family of four grows into ten. Poverty and impermanence define their lives, but with faith, hope, and backbreaking work, the family endures.



Weedflower by Cynthia Kadohata
 Grades 6-8 (260 p) *Audiobook available*
 After twelve-year-old Sumiko and her Japanese-American family are relocated from their flower farm in southern California to an internment camp on a Mojave Indian reservation in Arizona, she helps her family and neighbors, becomes friends with a local Native American boy, and tries to hold on to her dream of owning a flower shop.



The Iron Dragon Never Sleeps by Stephen Krensky
 Grades 3-6 (90 p) *Shelved in Moving Up*
 In 1867, while staying with her father in a small California mining town, ten-year-old Winnie meets a Chinese boy close to her age and discovers the role of his people in completing the transcontinental railroad.

Patty Reed's Doll by Rachel K. Laurgaard
 Grades 4-8 (143 p)
 A wonderful account of crossing the country by wagon train as seen through the eyes of Patty's doll as she crosses the Sierra Nevada Mountains with the Donner Party. The doll is presently on display at Sutter's Fort in Sacramento.



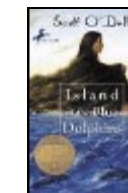
A Boy No More by Harry Mazer
 Grades 7-9 (136 p) *Boy at War trilogy*
 After his father is killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor, Adam, his mother, and sister are evacuated from Hawaii to California, where he

must deal with his feelings about the war, Japanese internment camps, his father, and his own identity.

Carlota by Scott O'Dell
 Grades 5-8 (153 p)
 A young California girl learns to deal with her father's expectations that she act as the son he lost years before. She relates her feelings and experiences as a participant in the Battle of San Pasqual during the last days of the war between the Californians and Americans.



Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell
 Grades 4-7 (189 p) *Audiobook available*
 This book records the courage and self-reliance of an Indian girl who lived alone for eighteen years on an isolated island off the California coast when her tribe emigrated and she was left behind.



The Journal of Douglas Allen Deeds: The Donner Party Expedition by Rodman Philbrick
 Grades 5-9 (155 p) *My Name is America series*
 Douglas Deeds, a fifteen-year-old orphan, keeps a journal of his travels by wagon train as a member of the ill-fated Donner Party, which became stranded in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the winter of 1846-1847.

The Strange Case of Baby H by Kathryn Reiss
 Grades 4-6 (155 p) *Audiobook available*
American Girl History Mystery series
 In the aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, twelve-year-old Clara finds a baby left on the doorstep of her family's boarding house, and sets out to unravel the surrounding mysteries.



The Boy Who Saved Baseball by John H. Ritter
 Grades 5-8 (216 p) *Audiobook available*
 The fate of a small California town rests on the outcome of one baseball game, and Tom Gallagher hopes to lead his team to victory with the secrets of the now disgraced player, Dante Del Gato.



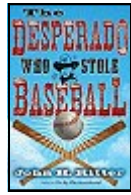
Pleasanton Public Library
 Children's Services
 400 Old Bernal Ave.
 Pleasanton, California 94566
 (925) 931-3400

Hours:
 Monday-Thursday: 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.
 Friday-Saturday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
 Sunday: 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.



California Fiction Books for Younger Readers

The Desperado Who Stole Baseball



by John H. Ritter
Grades 5-8 (260 p) *Audiobook available*
Prequel to: The Boy Who Saved Baseball

In 1881, the scrappy, rough-and-tumble baseball team in a California mining town enlists the help of a quick-witted twelve-year-old orphan and the notorious outlaw Billy the Kid to win a big game against the National League Champion Chicago White Stockings.

Dragon's Gate

by Laurence Yep
Grades 6-10 (273 p) *Sequel to: Mountain Light*
Golden Mountain Chronicles series

When he accidentally kills a Manchu, a fifteen-year-old Chinese boy is sent to America to join his father, an uncle, and other Chinese working to build a tunnel for the transcontinental railroad through the Sierra Nevada Mountains in 1867.

The Earth Dragon Awakes

by Laurence Yep
Grades 4-7 (117 p)

Eight-year-old Henry and nine-year-old Chin love to read about heroes in popular “penny dreadful” novels, until they both witness real courage while trying to survive in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.

Meet Julie

by Megan McDonald
Grades 3-5 *Shelved in Moving Up*
American Girls Collection series

In 1974, after Julie’s parents divorce, she moves to a new San Francisco neighborhood where the school does not have a girls’ basketball team, so she fights for the right to play on the boys’ team.

Baseball Saved Us

by Ken Mochizuki
Grades 3-5 *Shelved in Moving Up*

A Japanese American boy learn to play baseball when he and his family are forced to live in an internment camp during WWII, and his ability to play helps him after the war is over.



Anita of Rancho Del Mar

by Elaine F. O’Brien
Grades 4-8 (176 p) *Shelved in J Paperbacks “O”*

This book is a wonderful way to learn about the Rancho period of California. It is full of authentic historical and cultural details. Anita, a girl of twelve, is always in the middle of exciting events. She and her siblings take part in fiestas, boundary disputes, an encounter with a mountain lion, and a wild horse round up.

Esperanza Rising

by Pan Muñoz Ryan
Grades 5-8 (262 p)

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go to 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.

Riding Freedom

by Pam Muñoz Ryan
Grades 4-7 (138 p)

A fictionalized account of Charley (Charlotte) Parkhurst who ran away from an orphanage, posed as a boy, moved to California, and fooled everyone by her appearance.



And Condors Danced

by Zilpha Keatley Snyder
Grades 5-8 (211 p)

The year Cady turns eleven, 1907, is filled with playing detective, watching condors, observing a fierce feud involving her family’s Southern California ranch, and coping with unexpected tragedies.

Cat Running

by Zilpha Keatley Snyder
Grades 4-7 (168 p) *Audiobook available*

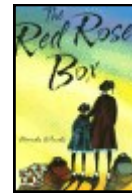
When eleven-year-old Cat Kinsey builds a secret hideout to escape her unhappy home, she slowly gets to know a poor family who came to California after losing their Texas home to the dust storms of the 1930’s.



The Red Rose Box

by Brenda Woods
Grades 4-7 (136 p)

In 1953, Leah Hopper dreams of leaving the poverty and segregation of her home in Sulphur, Louisiana, and when Aunt Olivia sends train tickets to Los Angeles as part of her tenth birthday present, Leah gets a first taste of freedom.



The Journal of Wong Ming Chung: A Chinese Miner

by Laurence Yep
Grades 5-8 (219 p) *My Name is America series*

A young Chinese boy, nicknamed “Runt,” records his experiences in a journal as he travels from Southern China to California in 1852 to join his uncle during the California Gold Rush.

California Contemporary Fiction

Steinbeck’s Ghost

by Lewis Buzbee
Grades 5-8 (343 p)

Unhappy after his parents move to a weird subdivision and become workaholics, thirteen-year-old Travis returns to his old Salinas neighborhood and becomes actively involved in saving the John Steinbeck Library and, at the same time, begins seeing characters from Steinbeck’s books who seem to have a message for him.



There’s an Owl in the Shower

by Jean Craighead George
Grades 4-7 (133 p)

Because protecting spotted owls has cost Borden’s father his job as a logger in the old growth forest of northern California, Borden intends to kill any spotted owl he sees, until he and his father find themselves taking care of a young owlet.



Earthquake Terror

by Peg Kehret
Grades 4-7 (132 p)

When an earthquake hits the isolated island in northern California where his family had been camping, twelve-year-old Jonathan Palmer must find a way to keep himself, his partially paralyzed younger sister, and their dog alive until help arrives.



Tiger, Tiger Burning Bright

by Ronald Koertge
Grades 7-9 (179 p)

Worried that his mother will send his beloved grandfather to a nursing home, “for his own good,” Jesse and some of his eighth-grade classmates accompany Pappy into the mountains near their small California town to look for the tiger tracks he claims to have seen.



Any Small Goodness: A Novel of the Barrio

by Tony Johnston
Grades 4-7 (128 p)

Arturo and his family and friends share all kinds of experiences living in the barrio of East Los Angeles—reclaiming their names, playing basketball, championing the school librarian, and even starting their own gang.



Ruby Electric: A Novel

by Theresa Nelson
Grades 5-8 (264 p)
Twelve-year-old Ruby Miller, movie buff and aspiring screen writer, tries to resolve the mysteries surrounding her little brother’s stuffed woolly mammoth and their father’s five year absence.



Liars

by P.J. Petersen
Grades 6-9 (169 p)
Life in the remote town of Alder Creek, California, is boring for eight-grader Sam and his friends, until his newly awakened ability to tell when a person is lying involves him in a series of mysterious events.



Paperquake: A Puzzle

by Kathryn Reiss
Grades 5-8 (264 p)
Certain that she is being drawn by more than coincidences into the lives of people living nearly 100 years ago at the time of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, Violet, who feels like the odd sister in a set of triplets, searches for clues to help her avert an imminent tragedy.



At the Sound of the Beep

by Marilyn Sachs
Grades 5-7 (154 p)
Distraught at the thought of their parents’ divorcing, a set of twins, brother and sister, run away from home and take up residence in Golden Gate Park, where they encounter many homeless people and hear there is a murderer loose among them.

Summer on Wheels

by Gary Soto
Grades 5-8 (163 p) *Sequel to: Crazy Weekend*
Hector and his best friend Mondo enjoy many exciting adventures when they take a six-day bike trip from their East Los Angeles neighborhood to the Santa Monica beach during summer vacation.

Minn and Jake’s Almost Terrible Summer

by Janet Wong
Grades 4-6 (98 p)
Ten-year-old Jake’s summer starts off badly, goes downhill when his family visits Los Angeles, California, and his old friends are too busy for him, then things get even worse after he disagrees with Minn and when her family joins his for a trip to Disneyland.



The Case of the Goblin Pearls

by Laurence Yep
Grades 5-8 (179 p) *Chinatown Mystery series*
Lily and her aunt, a Chinese American movie actress, join forces to solve the theft of some priceless pearls and stop the operator of a sweatshop in San Francisco’s Chinatown.



Child of the Owl

by Laurence Yep
Grades 4-6 (217 p)
A twelve-year-old girl who knows little about her Chinese heritage is sent to live with her grandmother in San Francisco’s Chinatown.

Chang’s Paper Pony

by Eleanor Coerr
Grades 1-3 (64 p) *Shelved in Early Readers*
In San Francisco during the 1850’s gold rush, Chang, the son of Chinese immigrants, wants a pony but cannot afford one until his friend Big Pete finds a solution.



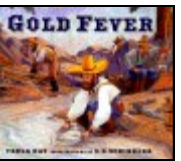
La Mariposa

by Francisco Jimenez
Grades 1-4 (38 p) *Shelved in Moving Up*
Spanish edition available
This is the autobiographical story of Francisco Jimenez when he first began school in California. During his first year of school, Francisco understands little of what his teacher is saying. He is drawn to a caterpillar as it becomes a butterfly. This moving story is about a Spanish-speaking student’s journey through first grade.



Gold Fever

by Verla Kay
Grades K-2 — JPB “K”
In this brief rhyming story set during the gold rush, Jasper leaves his family and farm to pursue his dream of finding gold.



Boom Town

by Sonia Levitin
Grades 1-5—JPB “L”
After her family moves to California, where her father goes to work in the gold fields, Amanda decides to make her own fortune baking pies and she encourages others to provide the necessary services – from a general store to a school – that enables her town to prosper.



Nine for California

by Sonia Levitin
Grades 1-5—JPB “L”
Amanda travels by stagecoach with her four siblings and her mother from Missouri to California to join her father.



Earthquake in the Early Morning

by Mary Pope Osborne
Grades 2-4 (72 p) *Shelved in Moving Up*
Magic Tree House series
The Magic Tree House takes Jack and Annie to San Francisco in 1906 in time for them to experience one of the biggest earthquakes the United States has ever known.



Oranges on Golden Mountain

by Elizabeth Partridge
Grades 1-3 — JPB “P”
When hard times fall on his family, Jo Lee is sent from China to San Francisco, where he helps his uncle fish and dreams of being reunited with his mother and sister.



California A to Z

by Dorothy Hines Weaver
Grades K-4 (32 p) JPB “W”
Fascinating facts about California are presented, representing each letter of the alphabet.

