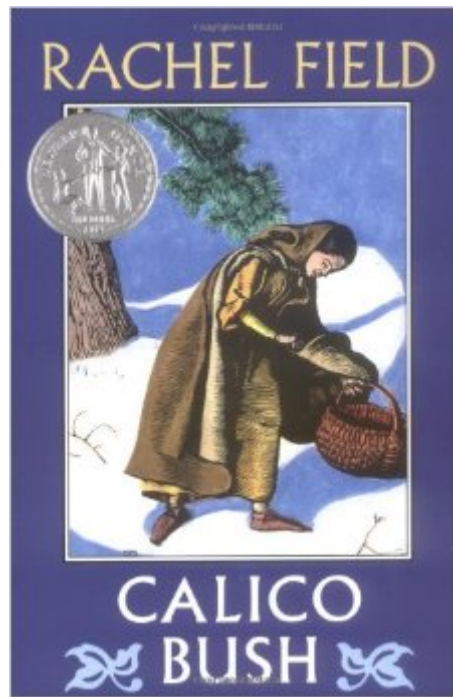


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# Calico Bush



## Synopsis

In 1743, thirteen-year-old Marguerite Ledoux travels to Maine as the indentured servant of a family that regards her as little better than the Indians that threaten them, but her strength, quick thinking and courage surprise them all.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1060 (What's this?)

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Aladdin (September 1, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0689822855

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Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.6 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (25 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #222,122 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #3 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Reference > Citizenship #150 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > Colonial #1641 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Classics

Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

## Customer Reviews

This book was a 1932 Newbery Honor Book (i.e., a runner-up to the Medal winner) for best contribution to American children's literature. It is the story of thirteen-year-old Marguerite Ledoux in 1742-1743, a young French emigrant who finds herself all alone in the New World after her uncle and grandmother die. She agrees to be "bound" to a family who are moving to begin a farm on an isolated section of the coast of colonial Maine. Hence, this novel depicts farm life in colonial America and the interactions on a young girl in a whole new culture. It is a beautiful story and still finds appeal amongst readers today.

Rachel Field's *Calico Bush* tells of Marguerite Ledoux, a young French immigrant who has been bound out to the Sargent family following the death of her Uncle and Grandmother. Marguerite, now Maggie, must face the trials of pioneer life as the Sargents move to farm a lonely stretch of land,

continually threatened by Indians and the deprivations and dangers of their new circumstances. Maggie experiences the prejudices of her new home land, and fears the thought of losing her own identity. The four seasons come and go as Maggie experiences all the triumphs and struggles of life on the sparsely inhabited frontier of costal Maine. Calico Bush is another classic to be treasured from the author of Hitty: Her First Hundred Years. Rachel Field's love of the Maine coast shines through her descriptions of it harsh beauty.

This book was a Newbery Honor book many, many years ago, indicating that it was considered to be one of the best children's books written in that year. It is the story of 13-year-old Marguerite Ledoux. After her grandmother and uncle die, Marguerite is left alone in the New World, far from everyone she knows back in France. She ends up being "bound out" in service to a family who will feed and clothe her until adulthood, in exchange for her service. When the story opens, she is on a ship headed for frontier Maine with the English family she is in service too. One of the trials of her new role in life is that she is not called Marguerite, but "Maggie" by the family. The view the English in the colonies hold of the French is usually poor, partly because of France and England being at war, and partly because of most French people being Catholic. And, so she was fortunate a family was willing to take her, even if they were unwilling to address her by her French name. This tension is subtly illustrated throughout the book by the constant referral to her by the text as Marguerite, though she's always addressed by others as "Maggie." Thankfully, for Maggie's sake, her main responsibility is the young children, who forgive her for being French and love her just because she's Maggie. The book takes place over the course of a year, and at the end, Marguerite is not the same person she was at the beginning. The change takes place very believably over the course of that year. Some of it is just shown in events, while some is spelled out more in her thoughts. Her character is well-developed and realistic, and the other characters in the story are very interesting also and seem like real people. There are some brief references to rosary beads or to mass or making the sign of the cross, but no explanation of what these things mean, just that they aren't approved of by the Sargent family. So, I interjected some explanations along the way. My children (ages almost 8 and 6) enjoyed this story greatly. I thought it was good, but not outstanding; it's not one that I personally would read again. The writing didn't quite draw me in enough to be a 5-star, a bit too much summarizing of events and descriptive passages and not enough dialogue for my tastes. But, that's a personal preference. I will be keeping it though, and I'm sure that I will read it aloud again when my younger children are older.

The author, Rachel Field, excels at making her book come to life. The people in the story show quality traits of courage and kindness. The first part is a little boring, but the rest is superb. I love history and this is one of my favorite books that takes place during the French and Indian War.

This is a book of exceeding quality. The only reason I give it 4 stars instead of 5 is because it's sad in parts (which I hate in books) and I hate how cruel the Sargent's are to Maggie because he is French. Plus, it's not my favorite genre. Still, it's a great book with all the qualities a good book needs (and some bad). One of the first problems to come up is that Marguerite's (or Maggie, as the kids call her) position in life is bad! She is indentured (she put herself into slavery) to a family, the Sargents. This is made worse by the fact that the Sargent's are very strict and anti-French and Maggie is French. The Sargent's youngest baby wanders into the fireplace and is killed. There is some lovey type stuff in that Ira, a well educated man, falls in love with Abby Welles, a somewhat rich girl, and pursues her throughout the book. I am a Sci-fi and fantasy fan but this book still really caught my interest. Overall this is a very good book and I highly recommend it.

I believe Calico Bush is a good book because the brave people seem real. The main character, Marguerite, is an orphaned, French girl serving the Sargent Family for six years during the 1700's. The first pages are a bit boring, but the middle is excellent and the ending is perfect.

This book is OK, it wasn't horribly awful or the best book ever. It dragged out the story quite a bit, which made it not as interesting as it could have been. I liked the characters, I think Rachel Field did a good job of making those the best part of the book.

I read this book for the first time in eight grade and fell in love with the story and the characters. I read it for a second time in my 30's and loved it with the same intensity. Now I am 60 and will read it again. It is one of my all-time favorites.

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