



Hannah Fowler

Janice Holt Giles

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Samuel Moore and his daughter Hannah set out for the border country with a party led by George Rogers Clark but left to follow the Kentucky River to Boones' Fort. As the story opens, Hannah is nursing her father, injured when an axe slips and cuts his leg. By the time Tice Fowler, on his way to Logan's Fort, stumbles upon them alone in the wilderness, Samuel is dying from blood poisoning. When Samuel dies, Tice takes Hannah to the fort, where women are scarce, and Hannah finds herself besieged by suitors. Only with Tice, as silent and downright as herself, does Hannah feel at ease. Finally, she turns to the bashful Tice and asks him to marry her and take her away from the crowded fort. Together, they take their claim to land, build a cabin, and start a family. They endure the harsh frontier life, the threat of hungry wolves, a killing blizzard, and Indian raids. Hannah is an unforgettable character -- tall, physically and psychologically strong, the epitome of frontier womanhood -- brought to life by a woman who knew and loved the Kentucky people and setting about which she wrote.

Hannah Fowler Details

Date : Published 1956 by Houghton Mifflin Company

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Author : Janice Holt Giles

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From Reader Review Hannah Fowler for online ebook

Emily M says

Wonderful pioneer tale. The marriage story is so solid, and bits of prose took my breath away.

Susan says

Hannah Fowler! Somebody needs to turn this book into a movie.

Hannah and her father are moving from the Pennsylvania/Virginia border to Kentucky, to a place where a man can get clear title to his land, with no arguments as to which country or territory he belongs to. Land title. Yes, all it took was discrepancies about land title to make people move west.

Along the way, there are mentions of Daniel Boone, George Rogers Clark, and many names that I recognize as place names in Kentucky near where my grandparents lived. It's set during the Revolutionary War, 1778, but the impact of the war on Kentucky territory was nonexistent. They were out there in the woods, in virgin country that had seen very few white people, arguing with the Indians about who was going to live there. War was very far from their experience.

Hannah meets a man named Matthias, Tice for short, and her life really begins. Homesteading, building a log cabin and barn, babies, livestock, spinning wheels and looms, gardens, and wolves become part and parcel of Hannah's life with Tice Fowler.

Janice Holt Giles was a master of setting and mood. The setting of Kentucky wilderness and hills is vividly painted. A harsh blizzard is so well described that a body gets a chill in June from reading it. The voice of the novel is infectious, written in the rhythm and syntax of the Kentucky hills that Mrs. Giles made her home.

I love this book.

Rebecca Lentz says

Read as a teenager, it was on my grandmother's shelf...found the sequel to this years later by chance at the Canterbury Shaker Village, The Believers. What a find, this is a great story.

Lauri says

My mother read and re-read this book throughout out my childhood - when she was sad or ill. I sit by her bedside in her last days, watching her sleep, and pick up the large print version I tracked down for her a few years ago. I may have read it in high school. I don't remember. I read it now to try to see what gave her such comfort so long ago.

Pat says

An incredibly memorable book. Excellent in every way.

Susie says

Another good Janice Holt Giles book. Her characters are so believable.

Rene says

3+. Published in 1956, it is a story of Hannah Fowler, a frontier woman and her family, their dealings with the land and the Shawnee and Cherokee Indians before Kentucky became a state (circa 1770). I enjoyed the descriptions of them living and moving around the land in West Virginia (a favorite backpacking location for me). I also enjoyed the simple, sweet relationships she had with her husband and neighbors. I appreciated many little pearls of wisdom she had in her no-nonsense life and her love for the things that really matter in life. She was a strong woman.

Some parts I especially liked: (p. 82) "She felt an enlargement of herself, an expansion, as if now she had become big enough to take in the whole land that stretched before her. She felt strong and able and full of a queer, bubbly exhilaration such as she had known sometimes as a child when some new adventure loomed."

(p. 170) Speaking of a visit with some friends, "Hit was a good visit, warn't it? I do think a heap of William an' Jane."

"An' me. I d'know as they's any two folks that pleasures me more, . . . "They're jist somehow," she summed up, "awful satisfyin'."

And about falling in love, "(p. 118-119) Not quite a year they had been married, and it was a thing to wonder at yet, how known she had become to him, all her ways and all her looks. . . He thought how it was you learned so much about somebody when you lived with them, things they never even knew themselves, likely, and how it made them so much closer, like a youngun of your own flesh and blood--sweet, somehow, and kin.

Kelley says

Great book. The story of a woman in the wilderness of Kentucky in the days of Daniel Boone (1778ish). Took me a few chapters to really get into her speaking dialect, but a great story. In many ways it reminded me of "These Is My Words." Both are about strong women doing amazing things and thinking that they're perfectly normal.

Mitzi says

Re-read Sept 2014 - This is actually the 3rd time I've read this since I first read it in 2012. I loved it just as much this time as the first. I can't say enough good things about it, really - if you haven't read it, you are missing out! :)

It's a shame that Janice Holt Giles isn't a more well known author. I enjoyed her novel *The Kentuckians* very much, but Hannah Fowler is a step above. I am amazed at her ability to write in dialect and have it come off not as annoying, but endearing. The relationship between Hannah and Tice is so down to earth and genuine, it hits you right in the heart. I guess it is the difference between honest love that grows out of real life, vs. sentimental romance... And as she does in *The Kentuckians*, JHG re-creates the world of pioneer Kentucky beautifully, both the good and the bad. An amazing book.

part time librarian says

Very true that this is a book you can read several times. Our Library has several of Janice Holt Giles books and I hope they never decide to discard them because they are priceless@@ Highly Recommend to anyone who wants to know how it was to struggle during the first settlements. This was my favorite of her books but they were all great!!

Beth says

Hannah Fowler is true Americana. Written and published in the 1950s, it has been brought back into print and e-book. It is a fascinating story of homesteaders in Kentucky in the 1700s.

Hannah seems to me a super-human, determined, relentlessly hard-working woman. Everything— food, clothing, shelter, tools and belongings are wrought from one's own hands, continuous backbreaking labor, natures gifts and the land.

I found it fascinating to follow Giles story of these brave, tenacious, resourceful early settlers who survived and thrived. Of course many did not. It is the one of the reasons why many of us are alive today. Our ancestors were in in some way or another similar to Hannah and the Kentuckians in their struggle to survive.

The storyline, often predictable, sometimes unbelievable kept me turning the pages late into the night. The delightfully simple yet beautifully descriptive prose, authentic dialect and well drawn characters made the novel a perfect read for me.

Jeffrey Rennie says

A snapshot of life on the Kentucky frontier around the time of the American revolution.

Heather says

I really liked this book. It came up on my Goodreads recommendation list. The summary interested me but the fact it was written in the 1950 also intrigued me. The copy I checked out at the library was an original 1956 printing. It had that good smell that reminds me of books I would check out as a kid. The language was more difficult than a lot of the historical romances written today and it took me a while to get use to the pattern but worth the effort. I think part of the reason I liked it was because it is similar to Celia Garth (by Gwen Bristoe) one of my all time favorite books. If you can find a copy, I recommend this book.

Maurita Kling says

A good book to illustrate what Life was like back then! Hannah was raised by her father so she was much better equipped to survive in her situation than other women would have been & the book emphasizes that. Maybe a bit too much like a '& they all lived happily ever after' ending, but still a good lesson on how Tough life was in this brand new country!

Art says

I had read this book before however I forgot most of it.

Janice Holt Giles is just like Lois Lowry, Ann Ridnaldi and Pearl S. Buck.

I enjoyed this book about Hannah Fowler who like myself came from Pennsylvania.

Her Father and Her travelled the Ohio River and they got off on the Kentucky River while the rest went to the Falls of the Ohio. The cities there today are Jeffersonville, IN and Louisville, KY.

The Winter of 1779-1780 reminds me of "The Long Winter" w/Laura Ingells Wilder and "The Forgotten Soldier" Guy Sojar.

Story deals w/settling KY around the time of Daniel Boone, Jim Harrod, and William Logan. Many others who help settle KY are mentioned in the story.

A great story for Ladies of all ages of how they helped settle this great Country of OURS.
