FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Young Adult Fiction

George Johnson's War
Mary Beaty
Maureen Garvie
Groundwood Books
978-0-88899-468-4
(October 3, 2003)

George Johnson was six years old in 1773. His father, Sir William Johnson, was the Superintendent of the Northern Department of Indian Affairs; his mother was Molly Brant, stepdaughter of a Mohawk chief. George's carefree world fell apart when his father died and his revered older brother, Peter, departed. With his mother and six sisters, George left his New York valley, fleeing to Molly's Indian relatives. George was enrolled in a Montreal boarding school, which he hated; he spent much time dreaming of taking up arms and following in Peter's military footsteps.

At thirteen, George convinced his mother to let him join the King's forces and fight to reclaim the valley where he had grown up. Discovering that this war pitted neighbor against neighbor, George also faced an inner struggle with his half-Mohawk heritage. "I run two black fingers down my cheeks and smear the red in a band over my forehead. It's bear grease and powder. It feels gummy, like blood," he muses, but his Captain pulls him back into reality, saying, "You swore your oath to the King."

Based on actual historical people and events, this book brings to life the reality of Revolutionary times for young people. Taking the viewpoint of young George, readers will sympathize with the plight of the Indians as their land is seized little by little. The story flows smoothly and the crisp dialogue makes the characters real.

Author Garvie, a writer and editor with a background in children's literature, is co-author of Adjust Your Seat, a book on children and television. Beaty is a librarian and writer, formerly Coordinator of Children's Services at the Kingston-Frontenac Public Library, Kingston, Ontario. The authors have provided, at the back of the book, historical notes, a timeline, descriptions of the real people, and suggestions for further reading. Teen readers who enjoy learning about America's early history will love this book.

Linda Cooley