

*5 out of 5 stars*

[A Trip Back to a Better Time](#)

By [Bill Greene](#) on October 17, 2016

Format: Paperback|Verified Purchase

A charming story of old times for both youngsters and the young at heart. The story is told by a ten-year-old girl growing up on a small ranch near the Columbia River. It is wartime, her family is poor, and they are struggling with their endless chores, ever-mindful that they had to eke out enough money to pay the thousand dollars due on their mortgage or lose the land. The reader gets to share this struggle, but also gets to share the family's outlook: The Quarter-Circle-Three bar brand that they burn onto their cattle each round-up looks like the morning sun and always reminded them that every day begins at dawn with new hope, a new start, and a better tomorrow.

The story moves along briskly, revealing all the fine details of ranch life, the hard and hot work of harvesting, and the tension that comes from selling their meager produce. And yet it rings with the happiness of a determined loving family and the simple pleasures of pastures, barns, and the beauty and pleasures of pastoral life.

I was particularly enchanted with the story because, like the narrator, I was also ten years old in 1943 and lived under the gloomy clouds of a far-off war. It comes as a shock to look back at those times because so much has changed. I too lived with the rationing, the hard work, the eager anticipation of the next meal, and the threadbare existence of the Great Depression and then all the sacrifices we made during World War II. And, yet, we were just as happy then as we are now living in ease and plenty in the 21st century—a million miles removed from the 1940's. There is a lesson there, remembering those days, when everyone was friendly, helpful, and there was no violence, terrorism, or angry protests. It was a simpler nicer time that we may never see again.

In contrast to today, that rustic farm life taught every child that there was no use thinking others should be the ones doing for you. Instead, the youth learned that they could and should do for themselves. It was a time still shaped by the Greatest Generation, a people still devoted to honesty, hard work, and an uncomplaining persistence to survive and build a better future.

Both young and old will enjoy following the adventures of the narrator and heroine, ten year old Jane Eaton, who learns to put up with the heat and dirt of farming. Readers will become engrossed in her efforts to help her family in their struggle to save the family farm, and will savor her joy of success that comes from shared sacrifice. Highly recommended!.